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PETERLEE: A STUDY OF NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT

BY
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(North-East Area Study).

Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD,
University of Durham.
1978

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GEORDIE: Diversification that's what they call it when they close a pit and build a perfume factory....

WILL: Look, for God's sake, Geordie man, we've had nationalisation and rationalisation.... and then regionalisation and now diversification I divven think I can take any more....

Close the Coalhouse Door, Alan Plater.

PREFACE

This study examines and evaluates the development of Peterlee New Town, County Durham. Peterlee, designated in 1948, was among the "first generation" New Towns established under the 1946 New Towns Act. Now, thirty years later, it has almost reached its target population of 30,000. The housing programme is virtually complete and housing assets are to be transferred from Peterlee Development Corporation to Easington District Council in April 1978. In view of this, it seems to be a highly apposite time to look back at the way in which Peterlee was developed and take stock of the current situation.

Michael Harloe (1975, p.1) has pointed out that "the few available New Town studies tend to fall into two well-defined classes. The first are written by those who have either worked in or on these towns and are more propagandist than critical. The second are detailed studies of particular aspects of the towns, valuable but limited in scope". Aware of the shortcomings of both approaches, we have sought to produce an overtly critical and comprehensive case study. On account of the complexity of the issues discussed - and thus the detail required if they are to be adequately examined - it has been necessary to confine our attention to a single New Town. We have attempted, however, to establish links with sub-regional, regional and national contexts and policies.

This account derives from a larger research project in which the author participated as a research student. In 1973 the North-East Area Study, a multidisciplinary research department at the University of Durham, began an investigation into the attitudes and opinions of residents in the three New Towns of North-East England (Cycliffe, Peterlee and Washington). The research programme was co-ordinated by Dr. Ray Hudson and sponsored by the Social Science Research Council.

A large-scale and detailed questionnaire survey of residents in the three New Towns was undertaken in mid-1974, the findings of which were reported in Hudson et.al. (1976).

Several factors led to the decision to focus specifically on Peterlee for the purpose of preparing a thesis. Certainly it was clear from the results of the 1974 survey that Peterlee's problems were more acute, and more widely felt, than those experienced by residents of Aycliffe and Washington. The origin of the Peterlee proposal raised questions and issues which proved to be of great interest and we were concerned also to take the opportunity to delve into the remarkable history of the Durham coalfield. But, perhaps above all, it became apparent that a study of Peterlee would help to fill a gap in existing research. Not only is Peterlee one of the least-known New Towns but it has also attracted little attention from those who have written about either the North-East or the New Towns. A thesis by D.B. Steele (1962) largely concerned with the first three or four years of development, an incomplete study by K. Patton (part of which was published in 1978) covering much the same ground as Steele, and a local history by W.A. Moyes (1969) constituted the main part of the existing "research literature". One of the consequences of this shortage of secondary material is that the present study is very much concerned with relating the factual details gleaned from primary sources; it is to be hoped that this will prove useful to future research workers.

Our efforts to reconstruct a history of Peterlee's development were greatly helped by the co-operation afforded by Peterlee Development Corporation, which allowed access to some files and reports. We were especially privileged in being granted access to the Corporation's Board minutes which provided invaluable information. Local and regional newspapers provided some useful material and opinions expressed by Peterlee residents in the form of answers to

the questionnaire survey and casual comments at various times also proved valuable. The author is, of course, solely responsible for any errors of fact or judgement which may have occurred in assembling this diverse material.

A number of institutions assisted our enquiries including various departments of Peterlee Development Corporation, Easington District Council, Durham County Council, Department of the Environment and Durham County Records Office. The staff of Palace Green Library at the University of Durham have also provided much help on numerous occasions. We are particularly grateful to the Artist Project Peterlee, which gave access to photographs and interview transcripts and enabled the author to present his views to a wider audience. Many thanks also to Grace Booth for typing the work and the photographic unit at the Department of Geography for reproducing plates and figures in the text. We owe a large debt to colleagues and friends for their advice and encouragement: Ray Hudson, Alan Townsend, Derek Brett, Mark Johnson, Clive Taylor, John Carney and Jim Lewis. Especial thanks to my wife, Su, without whose support and understanding this study would not have been completed.

John F.T. Robinson.

Peterlee: A Study of New Town Development.

ABSTRACT

This study describes and critically evaluates the development of Peterlee New Town, County Durham.

The first chapter considers the origins of the post-war New Towns programme and points to some of the characteristics of the policy.

The second chapter then traces the background to Peterlee's designation, looking at the historical development of east Durham and the circumstances which led to the New Town proposal.

The remainder of the study focusses on selected aspects of Peterlee's development. The provision of housing in the New Town is examined and this is related to population migration and the changing pattern of housing opportunities in the sub-region. Aspects of Peterlee's industrial role are discussed, with particular reference to the concerns and efforts of the Development Corporation. Social policy is then considered and some of the salient social characteristics of Peterlee are indicated; an attempt is made to present a broad social history of the New Town.

Chapter VI looks at the management of New Towns and describes the nature of Peterlee's Development Corporation. Finally, we compare the costs with the benefits of New Town development at Peterlee.

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CHAPTER I

THE NEW TOWNS PROGRAMME - A PERSPECTIVE

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THE NEW TOWNS PROGRAMME - A PERSPECTIVE

1. Introduction

By way of a prologue to our discussion of the case of Peterlee, this chapter examines the New Towns programme as a whole and serves to establish the salient features of the New Towns policy. The legislative framework, which entails special forms of management and control, together with distinctive ideological origins and aims, defines the New Towns policy and differentiates New Towns from other forms of urban development. An examination of the policy is evidently a necessary pre-requisite to the critical appraisal of its application at Peterlee.

The first part of the chapter establishes the main components of the New Towns concept and demonstrates the convergence of disparate ideas which led to the emergence of the New Towns as an instrument of State policy after the Second World War. The New Towns Act and the recommendations of the New Towns (Reith) Committee are subsequently discussed and the chapter concludes with an outline of the evolution of the programme. A number of issues and problems are identified in the course of this account and are reconsidered and referred to in later discussions in relation to Peterlee.

2. The New Towns concept and its origins

2.1 The Utopian prospect

"It is a long cry from More's "Utopia" to the New Towns Bill, but it is not unreasonable to expect that that Utopia of 1515 should be translated into practical reality in 1946"

Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning, 1946. (1)

The New Towns concept is closely associated with a powerful and persistent Utopian tradition. Indeed, Thomas More's original "Utopia" visualised a network of garden cities, surrounded by a communally-held agricultural "green belt". More's vision was, of course, firmly rooted in contemporary problems; it was an attack on agrarian capitalism, then penetrating and enclosing the countryside (Gray, 1946, pp. 61-70).

Utopian thought contains both critique and the visualisation of an alternative, frequently conceptualised as an ideal city or state. A vision is pursued, a new start and a new society is conceived outside, and set apart from, the existing order. Such a form of speculation, transcending the present, is a recurrent pre-occupation of English thought and literature (Morton, 1969; Williams, 1975).

But Utopianism has not merely been confined to literature and common aspiration; it extended into community experiments promoted by a variety of religious and millenarian sects and, later, by social reformers. The moravians and quakers successfully created retreatist communities in the eighteenth century. Subsequently the "Utopian Socialists", notably Charles Fourier (1772-1837) in France and Robert Owen (1771-1858) in England, proposed and sponsored communitarian ventures.

Fourier's scheme, based on the self-supporting "Phalanx" and developed on communal lines, met with limited success; several

(1) quoted from Silkin's opening statement in the Commons debate on the New Towns Bill, 8.5.46. (Hansard, v.422, col. 1072).

such communities were established in the U.S.A. but all met with eventual disintegration (Benevolo, 1967). On the other hand, Robert Owen, who took over and transformed the degraded mill-town of New Lanark in Scotland, showed that community experiments could be commercially practicable. Owen, believing that environmental conditions and the efficiency of labour were closely linked, "reduced hours, increased wages, provided lavish social services and still found it possible to produce substantial profits" (Morton, 1969, p.169). He later sought to solve the problem of unemployment by the construction of "villages of co-operation", founded on collectivist principles.⁽¹⁾ Although little was achieved in this direction, Owen's ideas did give birth to the Co-operative societies - a movement which, incidentally, initially hoped to launch communitarian schemes.

A large number of community proposals and experiments were produced, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century; after 1850 the increased accessibility of the colonies drew many potential pioneers abroad. Of particular interest among these diverse and sometimes bizarre ideas was that advanced by J.S. Buckingham in his book National Evils and Practical Remedies (1849). This illustrates the authoritarian tendencies and scientific pretensions of some of the proponents of these schemes; in addition, this was a plan which inspired Ebenezer Howard, "the father of the New Towns movement", half a century later.

Buckingham put forward a plan for "Victoria", a scientifically designed temperance community. Numerous rules and prohibitions were formulated to ensure the rational and moral behaviour of citizens. Victoria was an early attempt at social engineering through physical planning, since the severely geometrical plan enforced class

(1) A proposal first advanced in Owen's Report to the Committee for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor (1817) and further described in his Report to the County of Lanark (1820). Details of short-lived Owenite communities at Orbiston (Scotland), Ralahine (Ireland) and New Harmony (U.S.A.) are given in Armytage, 1961, pp. 96-129.

segregation and facilitated social control (Eden, 1947). Buckingham went on to suggest the setting up of a Model Town Association to carry out his proposal, but was not successful.

Armstrong (1961) has documented the attempts and failures of numerous groups, both in Britain and abroad, who sought to create ideal communities in order to follow, and thus prove, the viability of their beliefs and social theories. The modern commune movement has directly inherited this tradition whilst the New Towns, "a long cry from More's Utopia", are more indirectly linked. These early experiments and proposals had the effect of bringing attention to bear on the idea that it was possible consciously to create the "New Jerusalem" - an idea which, in a more mundane form, inspired Howard's formulations and ultimately influenced the development of the post-war New Towns policy. As we shall demonstrate, idealism, if not Utopianism, is an important component of the modern New Towns ideology.

2.2 The nineteenth century urban crisis

In 1801 the population of England and Wales had been only 8.8 million; by 1851 it had doubled to 17.9 million and in 1901 reached 32.5 million. Population growth was complementary to the expansion of factory production and an increasing proportion of the population was to be found in the new manufacturing towns.

Housing development, although witnessing phenomenal expansion, did not keep pace with population growth. Overcrowding was a common response to the housing shortage and working-class families crowded together to share the inflated rent burden. In many cases the provision of housing, at low cost, was solely undertaken by speculative builders. But in some areas - on the coalfields, for example - industrial concerns provided accommodation; it was regarded as an inescapable cost of production. With few exceptions (Owen's New Lanark, for instance), working-class housing in the nineteenth

century offered no more than the basic shelter required for the assembly and reproduction of the labour force.

Numerous official and unofficial contemporary inquiries⁽¹⁾ documented the extent of crime, disease and alcoholism in the towns and pointed to their causes - overcrowding, insanitary conditions and, fundamentally, poverty. The existence of a crisis was gradually recognised; the cholera epidemics of the 1830s and 1840s, affecting all sections of the population without discrimination, appear to have been especially influential in stimulating middle-class concern. Perhaps of no less importance was a fear of "the mob" and the possibility of revolution, particularly after the civil disturbances on the Continent in 1848.

A number of responses to this deepening and potentially explosive crisis emerged, of which the most significant (in the context of this account) were State intervention, the activities of Housing Associations, the growth of Building Societies and the attempts, by a few industrialists, to establish model towns.

The State may be considered as "the factor of cohesion of a social formation and the factor of reproduction of the conditions of production" (Poulantzas, 1970). It is composed of numerous branches and its functions include the legitimation and maintenance of existing social and economic relations (Miliband, 1969).⁽²⁾ The intervention of the State in the nineteenth century can be regarded as an attempt to induce a measure of stabilisation, to counter the more destructive side-effects of industrial capitalism. It marks the

(1) Examples include the Report of the Select Committee on the Health of Towns (1840); Reports of the Royal Commission on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts (1844); The Bitter Cry of Outcast London by A. Mearns (1883); Engels' Condition of the Working Class in England (1844); General Booth's In Darkest England and the Way Out (1890).

(2) Our conception of the State derives largely from the theses advanced by Miliband in his The State in Capitalist Society. "The State" is not synonymous with "the Government"; central and local Government, the Civil Service, the Judiciary, Nationalised industries and New Town Development Corporations etc. are all branches of the State.

beginning of an involvement which was to develop and broaden to include, amongst a host of other activities, town planning and, eventually, the development of New Towns.

Central Government responded with ineffectual palliatives: sanitary measures introduced through a succession of Public Health Acts (1848, 1872, 1875, 1890) and the provision of powers to enforce the "removal of nuisances" (see Ashworth, 1954 and Gauldie, 1974). These Acts formed the foundation upon which subsequent town planning legislation and practice developed. The Shaftesbury Act of 1851 empowered the Local Authorities to build houses financed from the rates. Liverpool was the first authority to do so, undertaking its first housing schemes in the 1860s. Gradually other towns followed Liverpool's example. The transformation of local government in the 1880s into professional administrations with permanent officials brought further efforts in this field and by the turn of the century State intervention in the provision of working-class housing was largely accepted.

Housing Associations were private companies which, with varying degrees of idealism, philanthropy and success, built and managed cheap rented accommodation. Their "model dwellings", ingeniously designed, were based on the necessity to sacrifice "all amenity to the two (1) requirements of relatively low rents and physically sanitary buildings". By 1884 an estimated 32,435 people had been housed by 28 associations (Ashworth, 1954, p.84) and they had successfully demonstrated that the housing of the working-class in decent conditions was a commercially viable proposition. By the end of the century their methods and achievements had been instructive to Local Authorities which increasingly took over their role.

(1) Beatrice Webb, quoted in Gauldie, 1974, p.230.

The Building Societies, represent a third attempt to improve housing conditions. The Building Societies Act (1874) encouraged the formation and growth of these "friendly societies" by giving them the legal status of limited companies - another demonstration of State intervention by legislation. Originally intended to give the working-class the opportunity to become owner-occupiers, they largely advanced ownership amongst the middle class (Gauldie, 1974, p.207). With their subsequent growth came a major change in patterns of housing tenure in Britain, with an increasing emphasis on owner-occupation.

A fourth reaction to the urban crisis was the construction of model company towns, built by industrialists following the principles tried and tested by Robert Owen at New Lanark. In these cases "new towns", comprising workers' dwellings of a relatively high standard and some social facilities were established alongside new factories. The intention was not only to assemble a labour force - many of these schemes involved the decentralisation of an industrial concern to a new, undeveloped site - but also to ensure that the labour force was healthy and thus efficient. At the same time model towns considerably enhanced the status of the industrialists who built them.

The best-known examples of such towns are Saltaire, a new mill-town built by Titus Salt in the 1850s; Bournville "garden suburb", established by the Cadburys close to their new cocoa factory when they moved out of Birmingham in the 1870s and Port Sunlight, built to accommodate workers at a new soap factory operated by Lever Brothers. Each was dominated by the company which built and owned it and, in many cases, companies adopted paternalistic styles of control and administration. In Saltaire, Titus Salt forbade the hanging-out of washing, commercial advertising and public houses (see Dewhirst, 1960). At Bournville, tenants were

"greeted with a ready-dug garden and newly-planted fruit trees" to encourage the upkeep of gardens and the preservation of the estate's semi-rural appearance (Bell and Bell, 1973, p.273). Lever seems to have regarded Port Sunlight as his private estate and took great pains to ensure that workers behaved in a manner consistent with his moral viewpoint; for many years public houses were banned.

These schemes offered genuine and major improvements to the living conditions of a small number of workers. But, although their direct impact on contemporary problems was small, they were influential as concrete examples of what could be done. It was shown that the ownership of land was a prerequisite for the positive planning of its use. The advantages of coherent single-minded development were demonstrated. The commercial success of companies undertaking such ventures made it clear that philanthropy and profit were not incompatible; indeed there was much to be gained from assuming responsibility for, and maintaining control over, the living conditions of employees. However, they also illustrated the paternalistic tendency inherent within the concept of planned development, shown most acutely in attempts to create an entire new town.

2.3 The Garden City: "A Peaceful Path to Real Reform"

"The simple issue to be faced, and faced resolutely, is can better results be obtained by starting on a bold plan on comparatively virgin soil than by attempting to adapt our old cities to our newer and higher needs? Thus fairly faced, the question can only be answered in one way; and when that simple fact is well grasped, the social revolution will speedily commence."

E. Howard, 1965 edn., p. 146.

The Garden City movement and the efforts of its founder, Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928)⁽¹⁾ deserve special attention in any account of the origins of the new towns idea. Howard and his

(1) For details of Howard's life see MacFadyen (1970)

supporters modernised the concept of community foundation, replacing the increasingly unacceptable philanthropy of Victorian industrialists with a practical programme of widespread reform through joint-stock enterprise. The experimental Garden Cities they established at Letchworth and Welwyn had a major influence on contemporary planning and design. Moreover, Howard's followers in the Town and County Planning Association⁽¹⁾ were later instrumental in the Government's adoption of a new towns policy after the Second World War.

Howard's exposition of the Garden City idea was first published in 1898 under the title Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform.⁽²⁾ The book begins with a familiar attack on the evils of towns and cities, and a comparison of urban and rural ways of life. Cities are evidently attractive because they provide employment but they maintain "slums and gin palaces" and residents have to breathe "foul air". In contrast, the countryside has the advantage of "bright sunshine" and the "beauty of nature" but offers little employment and is characterised by a "lack of society". These differences are illustrated in Howard's famous "three magnets" diagram which shows the advantages and disadvantages, and hence the attractions, of town and country. The third magnet, "town-country", represents the Garden City, a compromise where "all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country may be secured in perfect combination."⁽³⁾ Howard looked forward to the day when a large number of Garden Cities would be such powerful counter-attractions that the old cities would be depopulated and then re-developed cheaply along garden city lines.⁽⁴⁾

-
- (1) The T.C.P.A. is the direct descendent of Howard's "Garden City Association", founded in 1899. It was re-named the "Garden Cities and Town Planning Association" after the Burns' Planning Act of 1909 and assumed its present name in 1941.
- (2) Subsequent editions of the book were published under the title "Garden Cities of Tomorrow".
- (3) Howard, 1965 edn., pp. 45-6.
- (4) Ibid., chapter 13 on "The Future of London".

He shared with the Utopian socialists the belief that reform could best be achieved "by the force of example, that is by setting up a better system and by a little skill in the grouping of forces and the manipulation of ideas".⁽¹⁾ It would be a "peaceful path" in that there would be no direct challenge to "vested interests".

The proposed Garden Cities would be built on greenfield sites in accordance with the following principles:-

- a) They would be developed as small towns with fixed ultimate populations of about 30,000. They would be surrounded by agricultural estates separating them from existing towns.
- b) All the land, including the agricultural estate, would be owned by a single company which would offer leases to developers.
- c) The company's revenue would thus comprise rents from leaseholds. The company would borrow capital and pay a dividend not exceeding 4% per annum to shareholders. Excess revenue should increase each year and be used for the "creation and maintenance of public works".
- d) Garden cities would be planned such that industrial activity would be segregated from residential areas. The company would also stipulate standards to be followed by developers and determine and control residential densities. Many parks and other open spaces would be provided.

Howard noted that his was a "unique combination" of earlier proposals. He had been influenced by proposals for organised migratory movements advocated by E.G. Wakefield and Alfred Marshall as a solution to London's problems of overcrowding and unemployment. Howard had taken up Herbert Spencer's idea of communal land ownership via joint-stock enterprise and he had been further inspired by Buckingham's use of scientific planning in his model city proposal.

The outstanding feature of the Garden City scheme was the estate company which was to recoup the "unearned increment" arising from development and use excess profits for municipal undertakings. Unlike Bournville and Port Sunlight, housing in the Garden Cities would be built by other private sector agencies. The estate company would control land use but undertake "little more than those things which

(1) Ibid., p.136

experience has proved municipalities can perform better than individuals", ⁽¹⁾ unless residents pressed for further extensions of municipal management.

Howard made it clear that his was neither a contentious nor eccentric scheme and thus was worthy of consideration by investors. It "does not involve, as has been the case in so many social experiments, the complete municipalisation of industry and the elimination of private enterprise", ⁽²⁾ but it will help to achieve, "in a manner which need cause no ill-will, strife or bitterness", ⁽³⁾ a more equitable distribution of welfare.

Receiving the support and encouragement of W.H. Lever and the Cadburys, Howard further expanded his proposals at conferences held at Bournville (1901) and Port Sunlight (1902). In 1903 the First Garden City Company was formed and an estate at Letchworth acquired.

Both Letchworth and Howard's second Garden City at Welwyn, begun in 1919, experienced slow and turbulent growth, stemming largely from lack of finance. Share issues were undersubscribed and there were "long years of stagnation", partly because of the Company Board's "inertia and bad judgement" (Purdum, 1963, p.40). By 1939 Letchworth had attained a population of only 18,000 and Welwyn 15,000, compared with ultimate targets of 35,000 and 50,000.

Nevertheless, important advances had been made. New standards in the design and layout of housing estates had been set by the pioneering efforts of Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin at Letchworth; these had been widely replicated, not in the form of Garden Cities, but in the development of garden suburbs and municipal estates. More significantly perhaps, the Town and Country Planning Association ⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ibid., pp. 90-1

(2) Ibid., p. 90

(3) Ibid., p. 113

(4) For details of the Association's history, personalities and efforts see Gladys Keable's Tomorrow Slowly Comes: A Brief Account of Sixty Years of Work for Better Towns in an Unspoiled Countryside, (1963).

was established as a persistent lobby advocating the creation of new, comprehensively-planned towns. Difficulties in financing and administering the Garden City experiments had revealed the need for assistance from the State if further schemes were to be launched. Eventually, the Association's efforts were rewarded with the New Towns Act - but not until State intervention had been extended by the experience of two World Wars and a devastating economic depression.

2.4 State intervention in housing and employment, 1900-39

a) State intervention in housing.

At the beginning of the twentieth century an embryonic town planning movement emerged, spearheaded by Howard's Garden City Association and the National Housing and Town Planning Association.⁽¹⁾ It was argued, justifiably, that Public Health Acts and by-laws were severely limited as a means of controlling housing development. The wider application of principles applied at Port Sunlight, Bournville and Letchworth was advocated. Hampstead Garden Suburb, planned by Raymond Unwin, proved to be an influential demonstration of the applicability of a planning method which went well beyond adherence to minimal sanitary standards.

By example and propaganda the planning movement gained support. Local Authorities, through the Association of Municipal Corporations, sought legislation giving them planning control over their expanding suburbs. Central Government responded with the first Housing and Town Planning Act (the Burns' Act) in 1909. The Act enabled Local Authorities to devise "planning schemes", setting out layouts, land use and building dimensions for new developments, thus ensuring the maintenance of "proper sanitary conditions, amenity and convenience". Its application was effectively limited to suburban schemes and its

(1) Originally established in 1900 as the "National Housing Reform Council". Its members included George Cadbury, W.H. Lever, Joseph Rowntree and Raymond Unwin.

complications, notably surrounding the problem of compensation, deterred Local Authorities from using it. In any case, the onset of the First World War postponed a fair trial for the Act; however, a new initiative in State intervention had been taken.

Building ceased during the War and this, together with accelerated household formation, led to a severe housing shortage by 1918. The imposition of rent controls in 1915, (which remained in force after the War),⁽¹⁾ was one of the factors which discouraged private sector investment in rented housing to meet this demand. "For the first time in memory the middle classes and 'deserving' working classes, who had previously been supplied by the private /rented/market, were without sufficient homes" (Ravetz, 1974, p.5).

The Lloyd George Government promised "homes fit for heroes" and sought to achieve this by encouraging public sector house building. A new Town Planning Act was introduced in 1919 (the Addison Act) which obliged Local Authorities to build housing for general needs and offered Exchequer subsidies to enable this to be done. Previously, many Local Authorities had been very reluctant to provide houses except in connection with re-housing following slum clearance. Now the principle was established that the provision of housing was definitely a matter for State intervention and that the responsibility lay largely with Local Authorities.

The Act itself was not particularly productive not least because post war shortages of building materials frustrated the efforts of Local Authorities. In 1921 subsidies were withdrawn and attempts made to stimulate construction in the private rented sector by financial inducements to landlords. But this initiative largely

(1) Rent controls were introduced after rent strikes by munitions workers in 1915 (notably in Glasgow) against landlords who sought to profit from the wartime housing shortage. The Government evidently feared social unrest and loss of munitions production. After the war it was not politically feasible to remove these controls.

failed; private rented accommodation, formerly the backbone of British housing, had already entered its slow, long-term decline.⁽¹⁾ For several reasons investment in rented housing had become an increasingly unattractive proposition. State policies had restricted profitability by rent controls, whilst public health and building regulations reduced the ability of landlords to resort to such methods as overcrowding and property neglect (disinvestment). Moreover, opportunities for investment overseas, notably in the colonies, were found to be more attractive to capital than the development of rented housing.

To an increasing extent the housing needs of the middle-class were met by owner-occupation through the Building Societies whilst the working-class depended upon State provision. Exchequer subsidies to encourage Local Authority construction were re-introduced in 1923 (by the Chamberlain Act) and increased by the Wheatley Act of 1924.⁽²⁾ In the period 1920-39 4.1 million houses were built, 28 percent of them by Local Authorities; by 1939 nearly 10 percent of the housing stock was in the public sector, compared with 2 percent in 1918 (Merret, 1975).

During the inter-war years town planning remained an unfamiliar art, beset by the problems of compensation and hampered by the lack of interest and initiative on the part of the Ministry of Health,⁽³⁾ nominally responsible for its application. Its most effective use was

(1) See Clarke and Ginsburg (1975) on the decline of the private landlord and the growth of State housing.

(2) The subsidy system is now a "traditional" feature of State housing provision in Britain. It is essentially a transfer payment from one branch of the State (Central Government) to another (Local Authorities) to enable the latter to charge rents below the full economic rent. To an extent it parallels the subsidy given to owner-occupiers by tax-relief on mortgages.

(3) W.A. Robson remarked that town planning "never gained a status at the Ministry of Health comparable with such services as main drainage or sewage disposal" (quoted in Orlans, 1952, p.17).

in the development of council estates, which Local Authorities were able to plan comprehensively. Despite the introduction of a Town and Country Planning Act in 1932 the proliferation of low density, privately-developed suburbs continued unabated and largely uncontrolled during the period.

Unplanned, suburban growth did, however, meet with a strong reaction. Rural preservationists decried the loss of agricultural land (e.g. C. Williams Ellis, 1937) and many others registered their opposition to "suburban sprawl", "ribbon development" and the suburban lifestyle. Alongside these criticisms, the Town and Country Planning Association continued to advocate self-contained Garden Cities, increasingly taking the view that these should be State-financed. The Association's viewpoint was, in fact, supported in two inquiries conducted by the Ministry of Health⁽¹⁾ and also by the Greater London Planning Committee. Effective planning legislation and the decentralisation of population beyond the suburbs received considerable support - but were yet to be embraced within State policy

b) State intervention in employment.

The emergence of serious and severe regional economic imbalance during the inter-war years resulted in the gradual extension of State intervention in the field of employment and industrial location.

The "regional problem" initially stemmed from the decline of traditional industries - coal, iron and steel, heavy engineering, shipbuilding and textiles - after the First World War. Loss of markets because of industrial development abroad, together with years of underinvestment in British industry led to declining demand and production and increasing unemployment. The concentration of these industries in the North, Scotland and South Wales meant that the effects of decline were most immediately and acutely felt in these areas. The world depression served to deepen the crisis.

(1) Chamberlain's report on "Unhealthy Areas" (1920) and the Marley Report on "Garden Cities and Satellite Towns" (1935).

At the same time new expanding industries were very largely confined to market-oriented locations in the South-East, thus exacerbating regional imbalance.

The earliest State regional policy measures⁽¹⁾ were somewhat narrow and ineffective; an industrial transference scheme to encourage workers (initially miners) to move to areas where employment was more freely available was launched in 1928. The limited success and impact of this policy - particularly when the world recession reduced demand for labour elsewhere - brought the need for new and different measures based on the containment of unemployment within regions and an attempt to bring "work to the workers". Accordingly, Trading Estates were established⁽²⁾ in four "Special Areas" which suffered most acutely from unemployment (Glamorgan, Tyneside, West Cumberland, Central Scotland). The Trading Estates provided factories on serviced sites available to rent as an inducement to re-locating firms. Although limited in application - by May 1939 only 8,500 workers were employed in 239 factories on these estates⁽³⁾ - the principle and legitimacy of State involvement in industrial location was firmly established.

A broad review of the regional problem was deemed necessary if further corrective measures were to be introduced. In 1937 a Royal Commission was appointed (under the chairmanship of Sir Montague Barlow) to investigate the causes and consequences of the

(1) For detailed discussions of British regional policy measures see A.J. Odber (1965) and G. McCrone (1969).

(2) Trading Estates were introduced under the provisions of the Special Areas Act, 1934, and given further emphasis by a supplementary Amendment Act of 1937 which authorised State assistance in the form of loans and deferred rents, rates and taxes to re-locating firms.

(3) Odber, 1965, p.334.

geographical distribution of industry. The "Barlow Report"⁽¹⁾, prepared before the outbreak of the Second World War considered urban and regional problems together and urged the use of new powers and policies to encourage the decentralisation of population and industry. The Commission argued that one of the ways in which this might be achieved was "by the well considered development of garden cities, satellite towns and trading estates."⁽²⁾

State involvement in housing and in the location of industry was beginning to be merged into a comprehensive New Town formula even before the War; but it was the immediate problem of post-war reconstruction which finally brought the concept to fruition.

2.5 Post-war reconstruction.

"We are fighting for something a great deal bigger than freedom from Hitler - for freedom from Squalor, Idleness, Disease, Ignorance and Want... We are fighting for a new Britain, for the rehousing of our fellow countrymen in a humane way, for the rebuilding of cities bombed by our enemies and bedevilled by ourselves, for the relocation of industry, for the preservation of our heritage of ancient buildings, and for the rehabilitation of the countryside. We must fight to win."

"Towards a New Britain", Royal Institute of British Architects, 1943, pp. 138-9 and p.142.

The war itself necessitated major initiatives in State planning and control; central organisation was clearly vital if resources were to be mobilized to meet the national emergency. Wartime bombing also demonstrated the need for decentralising industry for strategic reasons and new munitions and supply factories were established in the former depressed areas. The experience of wartime planning showed that, given sufficient powers, the State could assume considerable re-distributive and

(1) Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, Report, Cmd. 6153, 1940. The Commission also published 26 volumes of evidence.

(2) Report, para. 291.

welfare functions:

"Because of State intervention and control, millions of people found themselves better fed in wartime than they had been in peacetime; and through the agency of the State, they found their needs the object of more solicitude than any government had ever before thought appropriate. Well before the war had come to an end, they had been officially assured that the State, which had been deemed capable of so little in the inter-war years, would, when peace came, guarantee them employment, welfare, security and greater opportunities for education."

(Miliband, 1973, p. 273)

Furthermore, bombing had destroyed houses and factories and it was apparent that a large programme of rebuilding would have to be undertaken after the war. Reconstruction became a popular topic for debate: "people began to speculate on better things that might be built on the acres of rubble; and from this they went on to speculate how the out-of-date areas left unbombed might be replanned." (1) The idea of a planned "New Britain" after the war was a frequent subject of wartime propaganda and was found to be effective in boosting morale.

The reconstruction debate produced contributions from almost every conceivable group representing all shades of opinion. But especially prominent was the Town and Country Planning Association which was called upon to advise the Government and also sought to popularise the idea of positive, large-scale planning. The Association sponsored four major planning conferences during the war⁽²⁾, issued booklets on "Rebuilding Britain" and published a number of "Reconstruction Leaflets". Throughout, the Association vigorously supported the development of a national New Towns programme as a component of reconstruction policy.

(1) Osborn, 1946, p.47.

(2) For reports of these conferences see F.E. Towndrow, 1941; H.E. Newbold, 1942; D. Tyerman, 1944 and B. Bliss, 1945.

The problem of reconstruction received considerable attention from the Coalition Government. As early as 1940 Lord Reith had been appointed as Minister of Works and Planning⁽¹⁾ to devise a post-war planning strategy. Assisted by a panel of consultants, half of whom were members of the T.C.P.A., his Ministry was instructed to implement the main recommendations of the Barlow Report. Since many questions of procedure had still to be investigated, Lord Reith appointed the Uthwatt Committee to look at the unresolved problem of Compensation and Betterment and the Scott Committee to consider the effects of decentralisation on agriculture.⁽²⁾ Following on from the proposals of the Barlow Report, a separate Ministry of Town and Country Planning was formed in 1943, giving an additional stimulus to the planning movement. A further Town and Country Planning Act was passed in 1944 to extend development control and to provide powers for the compulsory acquisition of "blitzed" areas (Ashworth, 1954, p.231). Meanwhile, other Government ministries prepared numerous technical reports dealing with standards and procedures to be followed in the construction and design of new buildings and estates.⁽³⁾

Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan (1944) recommended a formal decentralisation policy to limit further metropolitan growth. The plan suggested the construction of several new "satellite" towns, and thus gave further official backing to a New Towns strategy.

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- (1) The new Ministry took over the planning functions previously held by the Ministry of Health. Lord Reith was the former Director-General of the BBC.
 - (2) Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment (Uthwatt Cttee.), Report, Cmd. 6386 and the Committee on Land Utilization in Rural Areas (Scott Cttee.), Report, Cmd. 6378.
 - (3) See, for example, the list of papers cited in the Appendix to the Final Report of the New Towns (Reith) Committee, Cmd. 6876, 1946.

The return to power of a Labour Government, with an impressive majority, in July 1945 ensured the continuation and extension of State intervention in the economy, in the field of welfare provision and in housing and planning. The new Government maintained that, this time, "homes fit for heroes" would not be a hollow promise and committed itself to large-scale public sector housing programmes. The existing planning machinery was also to be remodelled to provide a comprehensive planning system.

The views contained in the Barlow Report and the Abercrombie Plan were largely accepted, including proposals for the development of New Towns. One of the first acts of Lewis Silkin, the new Minister of Town and Country, was to announce the appointment of a committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Reith, to investigate how new towns might be established. The terms of reference of the New Towns Committee were:

"To consider the general questions of the establishment, development, organisation and administration that will arise in the promotion of new towns in furtherance of a policy of planned decentralisation from congested urban areas; and in accordance therewith to suggest guiding principles on which such Towns should be established and developed as self-contained and balanced communities for work and living."

A little over a year later the first of Britain's New Towns was designated.

3. The Reith Committee and the New Towns Act

3.1 Introduction

Although the New Towns (Reith) Committee had no more than an advisory function, most of its recommendations were accepted by Central Government and, subsequently, New Town Development Corporations. The Committee's reports provide a valuable and detailed statement of the purposes of the policy and its ideological underpinnings. These reports are of continuing significance for they have not been superseded; they remain the most significant and complete exposition of the New Towns policy.

The New Towns Bill was prepared before the Reith Committee had completed their inquiry. The Committee worked quickly and efficiently, producing three reports⁽¹⁾ in less than a year, but the Government took an unexpected opportunity to introduce the Bill in April 1946, three months before the publication of the Committee's Final Report. Hence the Bill was based on the two interim reports which covered the main legislative issues, especially the nature and powers of the agencies required to develop New Towns. The Committee's Final Report was much more general, dealing with many of the planning problems thought likely to arise.

The Bill, which was mainly concerned with the procedures for designating New Towns and setting up their Development Corporations, appears to have had an easy passage through Parliament. An examination of the Commons debate⁽²⁾ suggests that it was a consensus measure, welcomed by all parties as a rational approach to reconstruction. It appealed to the radical and idealistic spirit of the early post-war era and, like Howard's Garden Cities, the

(1) First Interim Report (Cmd. 6759), March 1946. Second Interim Report (Cmd. 6794), April, 1946. Final Report (Cmd. 6876), July 1946.

(2) Second reading of the New Towns Bill, 8.5.46. (Hansard, v.422, clms. 1072-1184).

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policy did not challenge major "vested interests". Compared with the Government's plans for welfare services and Nationalization, New Towns were hardly controversial.

The Act received the Royal Assent in August 1946; within a year six New Towns had been designated - at Stevenage, Crawley, Hemel Hempstead, Harlow, Aycliffe and East Kilbride.

3.2 General features of the New Towns policy.

a) Forms of management and control.

The Reith Committee considered the choice of development agency for New Towns and examined a number of alternatives. It was appreciated that each New Town would require its own agency which, it was argued, would need to possess wide powers and have a large measure of freedom of action. The Committee came to the conclusion that "Development Corporations", agents of Central Government would generally be most suitable, but did not exclude the possible use of bodies financed and controlled by Local Authorities or the use of "authorised associations", similar to those operating at Letchworth and Welwyn.

The Government, however, argued against these latter alternatives. The Minister, Lewis Silkin, maintained that the construction of New Towns was "not a task which can satisfactorily be undertaken by Local Authorities"⁽¹⁾ - notwithstanding the fact that some Local Authorities had gained experience of building housing estates which amounted to small new towns. "Authorised associations" were also ruled out because this was "far too big a job for them..... it is a job for the nation."⁽²⁾ The Government favoured Development Corporations, similar to the public corporations managing the newly-Nationalized industries, the Trading Estates,

(1) Commons debate, Hansard, v. 422, col. 1085.

(2) Ibid., clm. 1086.

broadcasting and so on. The denial of the role of Local Authorities was, in fact, the main area of criticism of the Bill in the Commons debate because some M.P.s feared that Corporations would tend to be bureaucratic and unresponsive to public opinion.

The initiation of New Towns was a Ministerial responsibility and the application of the policy was to be justified by reference to a somewhat nebulous "national interest". The New Towns Act states (section 1(1)) that:

"If the Minister of Town and Country Planning is satisfied, after consultation with any local authorities who appear to him to be concerned, that it is expedient in the national interest that any area of land should be developed as a new town by a corporation established under this Act, he may make an order designating that area as the site of the proposed new town."

Development Corporations were given wide powers:

"to acquire, hold, manage and dispose of land and other property, to carry out building and other operations, to provide water, electricity, gas, sewerage and other services, to carry out any business or undertaking in or for the purposes of the new town and generally to do anything necessary or expedient for the purposes of the new town"

New Towns Act, 1946, section 2(2).

Corporations have compulsory purchase powers and are expected to obtain the freehold of all land within their boundaries (the "designated area"), giving them full control over the planning of the town. It was anticipated that much of the housing would be built and owned by the Corporation and made available to rent. However, private sector agencies might also provide houses and would be encouraged to develop shopping and social facilities. Local Authorities would continue to collect rates within the designated area and would thus remain responsible for such services as education, some recreational provision and so on.

Corporations receive Treasury loans, re-payable over a 60-year period, to finance their activities. The Minister retains some control over the way in which this is spent since Corporations

must seek Ministerial approval for their planned expenditures. A Corporation's major source of revenue is rent from land and property.

Corporations are governed by a Board of part-time Members, appointed directly by the Minister. The Board is intended to be responsible for broadly directing the activities of the staff. The Reith Committee was concerned that the Corporations should be responsible organisations, in touch with local needs and viewpoints:

"it should be obligatory on the corporation... to develop and maintain co-operative relations with the local authority and residents of the area, and create the machinery necessary for that purpose."(2)

Accordingly, the Committee thought it desirable that some of the Board Members should live in the New Town. Channels of communication should be established between the Corporation and residents. A local newspaper or, failing that, an information sheet was deemed important as a means for discussion, criticism and debate and would be of use in keeping residents informed of the Corporation's policies and proposals. The potential value of a local New Town radio station was stressed; this might provide "a forum for the free and open discussion of many of the problems which arise in the course of a town's development."(3) The establishment of a Corporation information office was recommended:

"this office could render most useful services in helping new residents in making their arrangements for getting their house ready and other domestic problems... A helpful attitude to newcomers will contribute appreciably to good relations between the agency and the townspeople."(4)

The New Towns Act, however, makes very little reference to public participation, consultative machinery or, more generally,

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- (1) The powers, activities and finances of Corporations are discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI, with particular reference to Peterlee Development Corporation.
 - (2) Reith Committee, First/ Interim Report, para. 10.1 (iii).
 - (3) Reith Committee, Final Report, para. 243.
 - (4) Ibid., para. 255.

Corporations' external relationships. It merely stipulates that Local Authorities will be "consulted" when appointments to the Board are made and that, in making appointments the Minister shall "have regard to the desirability of securing the services of one or more persons resident in or having special knowledge of the locality in which the New Town will be situated".⁽¹⁾

It is clear that the Government's overriding concern was with providing Corporations with the powers to get the job done and, if necessary, override local objections to promote the "national interest". The importance of sound relationships between the Corporation and residents - and other bodies with which co-operation would be vital - was ignored or overlooked. The unfortunate consequences of this omission are a central theme in this study.

b) The location of New Towns.

Within the terms of strategic planning New Towns were initially regarded as a means to achieve decentralisation from the cities; the terms of reference of the Reith Committee saw New Towns solely in the context of "the furtherance of a policy of planned decentralisation from congested urban areas". They should be self-contained and free-standing - the "antithesis of the dormitory suburbs"⁽²⁾ built in the inter-war years. This conception clearly owes much to Ebenezer Howard, as well as the Barlow Report and Abercrombie Plan.

But the Reith Committee proposed another role for New Towns; they could be used to:

"regroup persons from areas of diminishing population and from small scattered communities, whose major industry is declining, and to rehouse them, not merely with greater amenities, but in proper relation to newly established industries".⁽³⁾

(1) New Towns Act, 1946, sch. 2.1.

(2) Reith Committee, First/ Interim Report, para. 1(3).

(3) Ibid., para. 1(3).

Peterlee was proposed and justified along these lines. These strategic planning objectives were clearly important in choosing - and justifying - locations for New Towns. As the programme evolved new objectives were added; in particular the use of New Towns to promote economic growth and revival in regions experiencing industrial decline and unemployment (see section 4.2. below), as an integral part of regional policy.

The siting of New Towns and their size was considered by the Committee in some detail. "Relatively undeveloped sites" were preferred because it was thought that this would ensure maximum freedom in planning and entail less dislocation and disturbance than would occur if existing towns were expanded. It was argued that these considerations outweighed the advantages of utilizing old centres in which some facilities were already provided.

The Committee recommended that, in most cases, the ultimate population of a New Town should be between 30,000 and 50,000.⁽¹⁾ This, they believed, would be sufficient to support a wide range of industries, services and social groups, yet small enough to give residents proximity to work, facilities and the countryside. The view was also expressed that "it is difficult to attain a sense of civic consciousness and unity in very large towns".⁽²⁾

The principles to be followed in planning New Towns - including land use, industrial and housing development, social and commercial facilities and so on - were considered at great length and comprise most of the Committee's Final Report. Many of the detailed recommendations are discussed in later chapters of this study in relation to the way in which Peterlee has developed. For the moment, however, we attempt to outline and disentangle the main economic and social functions set for the New Towns.

(1) Reith Committee, Final Report, paras. 20-1.

(2) Ibid., para. 17.

c) Economic functions.

If New Towns were not to become dormitory suburbs but "self-contained and balanced communities for work and living"⁽¹⁾, it was essential that they should provide opportunities for employment. Clearly the movement of population must be accompanied by the re-location of industry if New Towns were not to become commuter settlements. Hence, the Reith Committee maintained that New Towns should be able to offer employment to "all or a large proportion of their occupied population".⁽²⁾ In part this concern with self-containment was a reflection of the consensus reached which emphasised the negative aspects of suburban development and lifestyles⁽³⁾ and it also stemmed from the appreciation that suburban commuting led to further congestion.

Development Corporations were thus expected to make every effort to attract industry, providing an attractive and helpful environment for incoming firms:

"The greatest stimulus to the settlement of industries and businesses in a new town will be the provision of first class industrial facilities. Building regulations should be simple: restrictions few. The estate management should ... be organised to offer firms technical advice ... and to assist them in their negotiations with government departments ... with the local authority ... and with the supply undertakings. It is desirable that some factory premises should be built somewhat in advance of specific lettings so that new firms and firms wishing to move to the new town can do so without delay."⁽⁴⁾

Furthermore, "Corporations must be prepared to provide or arrange for the provision of sufficient houses for the workers

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- (1) This well-worn phrase first appeared in the Reith Committee's terms of reference. Its meaning has been variously interpreted (see Thomas and Cresswell, 1973) and its attendant conceptual ambiguities rule out its use in evaluating New Town development. Nevertheless, taken in context, "self containment" and "balance" do have value **as** general, descriptive terms.
- (2) Reith Committee, Second Interim Report, para. 21.
- (3) As discussed in section 2.4(a) above.
- (4) Reith Committee, Second Interim Report, paras. 28-9.

required by any firm settling in the town."⁽¹⁾ These recommendations were, in fact, followed closely and vigorously by the Corporations.

The restructuring of the space-economy was a major aim of the New Towns policy, deriving from several interwoven objectives. Firstly, the State acted to counter the self-destructive and de-stabilising consequences of the economic system; this, of course, was now a firmly established role for the State to pursue. Congestion and, in other cases, unemployment produced inefficiency and were also increasingly unacceptable.⁽²⁾ Secondly, wartime destruction of industrial capacity created a need for new industrial sites as part of the economic reconstruction effort; cheap and efficient sites could best be provided outside cities. Thirdly, the State undertook to meet the responsibility and cost of assembling labour forces for re-locating firms; here, the role of the State was not dissimilar to that of industrialists providing model company towns. Overall, the policy served to stabilise existing social and economic relations and provide profitable locations for industry; hence, the success of New Towns was predicted on the location decisions of firms.

d) Social objectives.

The Reith Committee's reports, the Commons debate and the subsequent literature on New Towns are littered with statements of social objectives, often vaguely formulated, which together add up to an ideological justification for New Towns. Not surprisingly there is a considerable difference between these essentially idealistic statements and the experience of New Town development.

(1) Ibid., para. 24

(2) Regional policy had also been strengthened by the 1945 Distribution of Industry Act.

The Committee's reports discuss, in detail, the number and kinds of shops, schools, churches, health and recreational facilities thought to be adequate to meet the needs of the population. Space and architectural standards are considered, with the intention of ensuring a rational, convenient and comprehensive mix of land uses. Throughout, these discussions are overlain with comment on the desirability of some facilities (theatres, for example) as opposed to the deleterious effects of others (dog tracks, pubs). Judgements are repeatedly made, based on a confusion of ethics which stress health, welfare and happiness; in this way planning was seen as a method by which New Town residents could be given "the means for a happy and gracious way of life."⁽¹⁾ At a more general level, Lewis Silkin expounded an exceptionally bold vision of the New Towns and the roles of planning and architecture:

"Our towns must be beautiful. Here is a grand chance for the revival or creation of a new architecture. The monotony of the inter-war housing estate must not be repeated. We must develop in those who live in the towns, an appreciation of beauty. I am a firm believer in the cultural and spiritual interest of beauty. The new towns can be experiments in design as well as in living. They must be so laid out that there is ready access to the countryside for all. This combination of town and country is vital. Lack of it perhaps the biggest curse of the present-day town dweller. I believe that if all these conditions are satisfied, we may well produce in the new towns a new type of citizen, a healthy self-respecting dignified person with a sense of beauty, culture and civic pride."⁽²⁾

In the Reith Committee reports the aim of creating "balanced communities" was interpreted to mean social balance, obtained by mixing together people of different social classes and occupations. This was primarily a reaction against the one-class council estates of the 1920s and 1930s and no doubt also reflected the fond hope

(1) Reith Committee, First Interim Report, para. 1(7).

(2) Commons debate, Hansard, v. 422, col. 1091.

that the wartime spirit of goodwill and co-operation across the classes could be retained. To attract people of different classes and occupations it was recommended that the New Towns should offer variety both in employment and housing, but it was realised that planning could only make a limited contribution:

"So far as the issue is an economic one, balance can be obtained by giving opportunity for many sorts of employment which will attract men and women up to a high income level. Beyond that point, the problem is not economic at all, nor even a vaguely social one, it is, to be frank, one of class distinction."(1)

Lewis Silkin, however, felt that it was possible to pursue social objectives through a judicious use of physical planning; he advocated, for instance, that the different kinds of houses should be mixed together:

"I am most anxious that the planning should be such that the different income groups living in the new towns will not be segregated. No doubt they may enjoy common recreational facilities and take part in amateur theatricals, or each play their part in a health centre or community centre. But, when they leave to go home I do not want the better off people to go to the right and the less well off to the left. I want them to ask each other, 'Are you going my way?'"(2)

Another element, partly allied to this, is the notion of "community" and "community spirit", which must be created and fostered

"In a true community, everybody feels, directly or through some group, that he has a place and a part, belonging and counting. He cannot put down roots in nor become conscious of responsibility for a place that does not give him that feeling."(3)

It was hoped that the New Town project itself would impress residents with its significance, generating civic pride, a sense of community and drawing them together as pioneers in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation. "The aim", Silkin remarked, "must be to combine in the New Town the friendly spirit of the ... slum ..., with the vastly improved health conditions of the new estate but it must be a broadened spirit embracing all classes of society."(4)

(1) Reith Committee, Final Report, para. 22.

(2) Commons debate, Hansard, v. 422, cols. 1089-90.

(3) Reith Committee, Final Report, para. 185.

(4) Commons debate, Hansard, v. 422, col. 1091.

4. The progress and evolution of the New Towns programme, 1946-76.

4.1- Introduction

This section offers a generalised account⁽¹⁾ of the New Towns programme, indicating the main changes in policy and practice over the last thirty years.

Although the basic machinery of New Towns designation and management has hardly altered since 1946, many elements of the New Towns concept have been revised and reformulated. The application of the New Towns Act in a wide variety of situations has, in itself, broadened the scope and redefined the nature of the policy. Of equal importance have been changes in social and economic policy, reflecting the differing views and commitments of successive Governments. The development of the New Towns themselves has been subject to changing fashions in architecture and planning; different "generations" of New Towns may be identified such that "a study tour of them reveals a history in miniature of the post-war years" (Schaffer, 1970, p.101).

The policy has also had to face and respond to changes in public opinion and large-scale social and economic trends. Declining birth rates, economic recession and inner-city problems have increasingly brought into question the relevance of New Towns and demonstrated the weaknesses inherent in the policy.

4.2 The development of the programme.

By the end of 1975 thirty-three New Towns, containing a total population of more than 2.1 million⁽²⁾, had been established in the United Kingdom (Table 1.1 and Fig. 1.1). In Great Britain

(1) For more detailed accounts see Osborn and Whittick (1969); Schaffer, (1970) and Evans, (1972). The developmental histories of individual New Towns are not discussed here but are summarised in two studies by Ray Thomas (1969 a, b) and can also be traced through the Annual Reports of the Development Corporations, published by H.M.S.O.

(2) This total represents an increase of about 1m population in New Town areas since designation.

Table 1.1 The New Towns Programme

New Town	Location	Date of Designation (month/year)	Original population of site on designation	Ultimate population proposed ¹	Population at 12/75
Stevenage	E/LR	11/46	6,700	105,000	76,000
Crawley	E/LR	1/47	9,100	77,000	73,000
Hemel Hempstead	E/LR	2/47	21,000	85,000	76,000
Harlow	E/LR	3/47	4,500	undecided	83,500
Aycliffe	E/P	4/47	60	45,000	26,000
East Kilbride	S	5/47	2,400	90,000+	73,800
Peterlee	E/P	3/48	200	30,000	26,500
Hatfield	E/LR	5/48	8,500	29,000	26,000
Welwyn	E/LR	5/48	18,500	50,000	40,000
Glenrothes	S	6/48	1,100	70,000	32,000
Basildon	E/LR	1/49	25,000	134,000	88,000
Bracknell	E/LR	6/49	5,140	60,000	42,600
Gwmbran	W	11/49	12,000	55,000+	45,000
Corby	E/P	4/50	15,700	83,000	53,500
Cumbernauld	S	12/55	3,000	100,000	43,000
Skelmersdale	E/P	10/61	10,000	80,000	40,700
Livingston	S	4/62	2,000	100,000	24,860
Dawley (Telford)	E/P	1/63 (12/68)	(70,000)	(250,000)	(96,700)
Redditch	E/P	4/64	32,000	90,000	51,800
Runcorn	E/P	4/64	28,500	100,000	51,700
Washington	E/P	7/64	20,000	80,000	41,000
Craigavon	NI	7/65	60,800	127,000	75,700
Antrim	NI	7/66	32,600	74,000	38,000
Irvine	S	11/66	34,600	120,000	52,600
Milton Keynes	E/P	1/67	40,000	250,000	70,000
Ballymena	NI	6/67	48,000	96,000	54,000
Peterborough	E/P	8/67	81,000	180,600+	102,500
Newtown	W	12/67	5,000	13,000	7,200
Northampton	E/P	2/68	131,120	240,000	151,000
Warrington	E/P	4/68	122,300	201,500	133,400
Londonderry	NI	2/69	82,000	98,000+	87,000
Central Lancashire	E/P	3/70	234,500	420,000+	243,900
[Stonehouse ²	S	7/73	7,250	70,000	8,100]

Location Key

E/LR	England - London Ring (Abercrombie Plan)
E/P	England - Provincial
S	Scotland
W	Wales
NI	Northern Ireland

Notes 1 These targets are as at 12/75. Many have been revised since original designation.
2 Plans for Stonehouse abandoned, 5/76

Source: Town & Country Planning, Feb. 1976, pp 94-5.



Map showing new towns in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Fig.1.1

(from Town & Country Planning,
Feb., 1976).

alone twenty-nine New Towns have, so far, entailed a total expenditure in excess of £2,000 million (at historic prices), of which almost two-thirds has been incurred by Development Corporations.⁽¹⁾ More than 300,000 new dwellings have been built in the New Towns, the majority of which are Corporation rented houses. New Towns do not, however, represent a major component of public sector expenditure, nor have they made a large contribution to the total of new development. Only about 3% of houses built since the war have been built in the New Towns and together they contain a mere 4% of the national population. Their symbolic significance - they have frequently been cited as demonstrative of the great achievements of British post-war planning - is apparently out of proportion with their actual impact.

The "first generation" of fourteen New Towns were designated between 1946 and 1950. In accordance with Abercrombie's Greater London Plan (1944), eight of them⁽²⁾ were situated beyond London's "green belt", forming a ring of self-contained settlements to promote decentralisation of housing and industry from the metropolis. East Kilbride had a similar function in relation to Glasgow. The other New Towns (including Peterlee) were designated for a variety of reasons which centred broadly on the need to provide housing and urban facilities close to sources of employment, corresponding in a general sense to the Reith Committee's idea of "regrouping" population.

These New Towns conformed fairly closely to the suggestions and recommendations of the Reith Committee. In most cases target populations set at designation were within the 30,000 to 60,000

(1) Expenditure Committee., 13th Rept., (New Towns), 1975, v.1. para. 12. The remainder of the expenditure has been undertaken by Local Authorities, the private sector and other agencies of Central Government.

(2) Including Howard's Welwyn Garden City, effectively "Nationalized" - thus giving access to a much-needed source of capital investment and thereby ensuring its more vigorous growth.

range (Aycliffe, with 10,000, was an exception⁽¹⁾) and they were to be built on "relatively undeveloped sites". Low density "prairie planning" and curvilinear layouts were adopted, reflecting contemporary planning orthodoxy. Social objectives derived from the Reith reports are included in most of the Master Plans for these New Towns - although not without some confusion as to their meaning in practice (Porzecanski, 1972, pp. 9-10). Notwithstanding "the general goodwill" associated with the launching of the programme, these first New Towns had to face "a morass of litigation and in almost every case there was...an outburst of resistance and objection" (MacColl, 1947, p. 429). Continuing shortages of materials and labour, coupled with expenditure cuts, also severely curtailed the activities of the Corporations in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The return of the Conservatives to power in 1951 heralded a decade of inaction and retrenchment for the New Towns programme. Preferring to leave the problems of housing to Local Authorities and the private sector, and unconcerned to intervene significantly in questions of industrial location, the new Government was not anxious to use the New Towns policy. During the 1950s only one further New Town, Cumbernauld in Scotland, was designated. The Town Development Act (1952) was introduced as a more acceptable alternative to the New Towns Act; this enabled urban Local Authorities to develop their own "new towns" by making overspill agreements with suburban and rural authorities.⁽²⁾

(1) For an account of the political pressures resulting in Aycliffe's very low target population see Bowden (1970).

(2) Examples of development under this Act are Basingstoke, Swindon and the two "new towns" in Northumberland: Cramlington and Killingworth. By mid-1975, over 86,000 dwellings had been built in 61 town development schemes (Town and Country Planning, Feb. 1976).

Industrial decline and increasing unemployment in the peripheral regions, together with housing shortages, provided the circumstances behind the designation of a "second generation" of New Towns in the early 1960s. These five New Towns - Skelmersdale, Livingston, Dawley⁽¹⁾, Redditch and Runcorn - were intended both to house overspill population from provincial conurbations and also provide conditions for the growth of new sources of employment. At the same time, regional policy was disinterred and revived by the publication of two White Papers⁽²⁾ on the North-East and Scotland, which recognised the potential contribution New Towns might make to regional re-development and modernisation.

The second generation New Towns differed from the first generation in many respects. The planners aimed for a "sense of urbanity", induced by high density and a tight built form. High levels of car ownership were predicted and encouraged by fast road systems. Pedestrian segregation, Radburn layouts and traffic-free shopping centres were in vogue. These towns were expected to have larger populations than their predecessors⁽³⁾, partly because the smaller, earlier New Towns had, on account of their size, experienced some difficulty in attracting an adequate range of facilities.

The third, and most recent, generation of New Towns⁽⁴⁾ largely derives from regional planning strategies prepared during the early years of the 1964-70 Labour Government (see Bull, 1967) - although Washington was proposed by the previous Government in the Hailsham

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- (1) Dawley was incorporated into a larger designated area in 1968 and the New Town re-named Telford.
 - (2) "The North East: A programme for regional development and growth" (Hailsham Report) Cmd. 2206, 1963 and "Central Scotland: A programme for development and growth", Cmd. 2188, 1963.
 - (3) The target populations for some of the earlier new towns were also increased at this time.
 - (4) We exclude from this category the New Towns designated in Northern Ireland; these are the products of the first application of the policy in the Province (following the introduction of a New Towns Act for Northern Ireland in 1965) and are somewhat divorced from the evolution of the British programme.

Plan. In each case the major intention was to channel and stimulate economic growth; the provision of housing is important and related to this aim, although appearing to be a subordinate issue.

With the exception of Newtown in mid-Wales, their most significant and distinguishing feature is their proposed size. Several will become new cities and incorporate existing towns of considerable size; the Reith Committee's preference for small towns on greenfield sites has thus been decisively rejected. At Northampton, Peterborough and Warrington this situation has necessitated the creation of a new form of partnership between Corporations and Local Authorities.

The Master Plans are technically sophisticated; statistical models have replaced vague idealism. They are a product of the optimism of the late 1960s. Rising levels of affluence and universal household car ownership are assumed. The emphasis is consequently on high levels of personal mobility (via motorways) and facilities to accommodate the "leisure revolution". Low density housing provides the "generous space standards" required by the affluent society. These New Towns were directed to encourage private sector housing and aim for 50% owner occupation (the Government also directed other New Towns to do the same by selling Corporation houses to tenants). More generally, the third generation New Towns were conceived to be suburbs beyond the suburbs, embracing consumer-oriented values and lifestyles.

4.3 Problems in New Town development.

A variety of physical, economic and social problems has been experienced during the thirty years in which the New Towns policy has been pursued. Many of these problems are discussed in detail in subsequent chapters in relation to the specific case of Peterlee - a particularly instructive example since its development history

includes most of the problems which can arise. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to briefly indicate some of the more common and persistent difficulties.

A major problem, experienced by most New Towns, has been that of maintaining a phased and balanced development programme. All too often a balance has not been achieved between the provision of housing, employment and services (shops, social facilities, public transport etc.). Largely this can be attributed to the fact that Corporations only have control over housing; for the provision of employment and services they must depend upon the private sector and other branches of the State (Local Authorities, Nationalized industries, statutory agencies). Hence in some New Towns, notably those in the peripheral regions, employment growth has not kept pace with the growth of housing and population because industry has been unwilling to move there (see Chapter IV). The problem has not been helped by the fact that regional policies are based on persuasion rather than direction. In the provision of services similar difficulties have been encountered, with both public and private sector agencies unwilling to provide facilities in advance of full demand, thus leaving New Towns to suffer prolonged deficiencies.

The preponderance of young families in the intake of New Towns has led to further problems. The low proportion of older residents, combined with an absence of established traditions creates a social environment offering little support to the young family; loneliness, financial difficulties and family breakdown are symptomatic of this. So too are vandalism and delinquency, problems which are probably also linked to deficiencies in social facilities (see chapter V).

Another problem, which receives much emphasis in this study (see chapter VI), concerns the nature of New Town management. Development Corporations are not subject to direct democratic control; they are answerable only to the Minister. Consequently, there is a tendency for them to be overbearing and unresponsive to the needs of New Town residents. Furthermore, their relationships with other agencies - particularly Local Authorities - have often given rise to friction, stemming in part from inherent incompatibilities between national and local interests and policies.

Recent events and a changing climate of opinion towards New Towns has generated debate on fundamental issues relating to the value and purpose of the policy itself.

The fuel crisis and subsequent economic recession has highlighted the disadvantages of the kind of end-state planning adopted in New Town development. Assumptions of increasing affluence, together with relatively high rates of population growth, which were basic in justifying and planning the third generation New Towns, have been shown to be invalid. Without very high levels of car ownership the relevance of transport planning which emphasises private transport and motorways must be seriously questioned. Moreover, in a situation of almost zero national population growth, the need for New Towns is highly debatable.

The increasing appreciation of the far-reaching consequences of inner city decline has brought questions concerning the wider effects of New Towns. Studies by Shelter and, more recently, by the Community Development Projects⁽¹⁾ have stressed that the New Towns have attracted young skilled workers and that their movement, together with industry, out of the inner cities has served to weaken the social and economic structure of the older areas, exacerbating

(1) See, for example, Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project Report (1972) and The Aims of Industry, Canning Town C.D.P. (1974).

the problems of those who have stayed behind. New Towns have clearly not catered for those in greatest need - the unskilled, the unemployed, the homeless, the aged and the poor. The New Towns have, with varying degrees of success, provided locations conducive to the growth and profitability of industry - but the firms that move to New Towns are often those which employ skilled labour and/or female labour. Hence those with the most critical housing and employment problems are not required by, and consequently not attracted to, the New Towns. This is most clearly apparent in the case of the London Ring New Towns.

The response of Central Government to these issues is closely connected to its concern to implement expenditure cuts. Policy is being re-oriented towards low cost methods; in housing, for example, re-habilitation is now preferred to clearance and new development. New and expensive departures in State intervention are out of favour; thus the Community Land Act, for example, was emasculated by expenditure cuts and proposals for Development Corporations to develop Maplin and re-develop London's Docklands were shelved.

The New Towns programme was reviewed by a Government Expenditure Committee⁽¹⁾ in 1974-5 - the first time since 1946 that such a review has been undertaken. The cost-effectiveness of New Towns was questioned, so too was the relevance of the policy to current problems. The Department of the Environment revealed that no further New Towns were proposed for the foreseeable future. Some months later the Government took the unprecedented step of

(1) Thirteenth Report from the Expenditure Committee (New Towns), 5 vols., 1975.

disestablishing the New Town planned for Stonehouse and declared its intention to divert resources to the redevelopment of Glasgow instead. More recently, proposals for increasing the target population of some New Towns were rejected and several actually had their targets reduced. In addition, new legislation was introduced in 1976⁽¹⁾ to promote the transfer of housing from Corporations to Local Authorities and the dissolution of Corporations in the older, completed New Towns is anticipated.

It is evident that the Government has come to regard New Towns - and their Corporations - as a dispensable luxury. For the time being, at least, the policy is being set aside.

(1) New Towns (Amendment) Act, 1976.

5. Concluding comment.

In this chapter we have attempted to demonstrate, in broad terms, the background of ideas and events which led to the adoption of a New Towns policy and briefly indicate some aspects of the programme's development.

The importance of the conditions leading to an increasing involvement by the State have been stressed. It is argued that the consequences of economic growth and capitalist development included crises in housing and employment which of necessity required State intervention. Failures inherent in the economic system had to be countered to maintain its stability and continuation and, in default of effective action by the private sector, the State was moved to intervene. The provision of working-class housing and the formulation of policies giving (limited) control over the distribution of industry were departures of major significance. The subsequent necessity for post-war reconstruction presented an opportunity to fuse these elements together into a single policy package - the New Towns - and provide environments conducive to economic reconstruction, revival and growth.

This is not, however, to deny the existence of idealistic motives. Certainly the Reith Committee's Reports and Silkin's statements contain social objectives which, in context, could only be described as idealistic. To a large extent this is a product of the spirit of Labourism in the early post-war period but there are also links with a deeper Utopian tradition. The idea of building new communities stimulates a vision of the ideal. Such a vision amounts also to an ideological justification having widespread appeal - of a new society without class conflict dedicated to the pursuit of "a happy and gracious way of life". The subsequent development of the New Towns, however, conveys a

reality which falls far short of such of ideals largely because the social vision is in contradiction with much more powerful imperatives. This is the most important point which this study seeks to demonstrate.

CHAPTER II

PETERLEE - BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND PLAN.

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1. Introduction

This chapter considers the reasons for the designation of Peterlee New Town and then goes on to discuss the problems encountered in the period immediately following designation. This serves to establish the background of events which forms a basis for the subsequent analysis of particular aspects of Peterlee's development.

Peterlee is located on the eastern edge of the Durham coal-field between Sunderland and Hartlepool, within the Easington District (formerly Rural District)⁽¹⁾ of County Durham, as shown in Fig. 2.1. Section 2 provides an account of the economic and social history of this area, focussing largely on the expansion of coal mining and the conditions associated with it. Again we explore the theme of growing State intervention in relation to the local situation. Section 3 then deals with the emergence of the proposal, put forward by Easington Rural District Council (R.D.C.) for a New Town. The circumstances surrounding this unusual initiative are considered, as are the reasons for its adoption by Central Government.

Peterlee was designated in March 1948. Section 4 looks at the serious difficulties which emerged and threatened the scheme in the period between designation and the eventual arrival, in 1951, of Peterlee's first tenants. This period was a great anticlimax: a false start which served to remove the Corporation's

(1) Easington Rural District (R.D.) was superseded, as a result of local government reforms, by Easington District in 1974. The new District contains most of the old R.D. but includes the former Urban District of Seaham. This distinction, shown in Fig. 2.1., should be noted to avoid confusion.

greatest asset - local support. It also demonstrated the disadvantages and the problems which can arise when a locally-promoted scheme is taken over by Central Government. Peterlee came to be regarded locally as an unwelcome imposition and its origin in local aspiration became increasingly irrelevant.

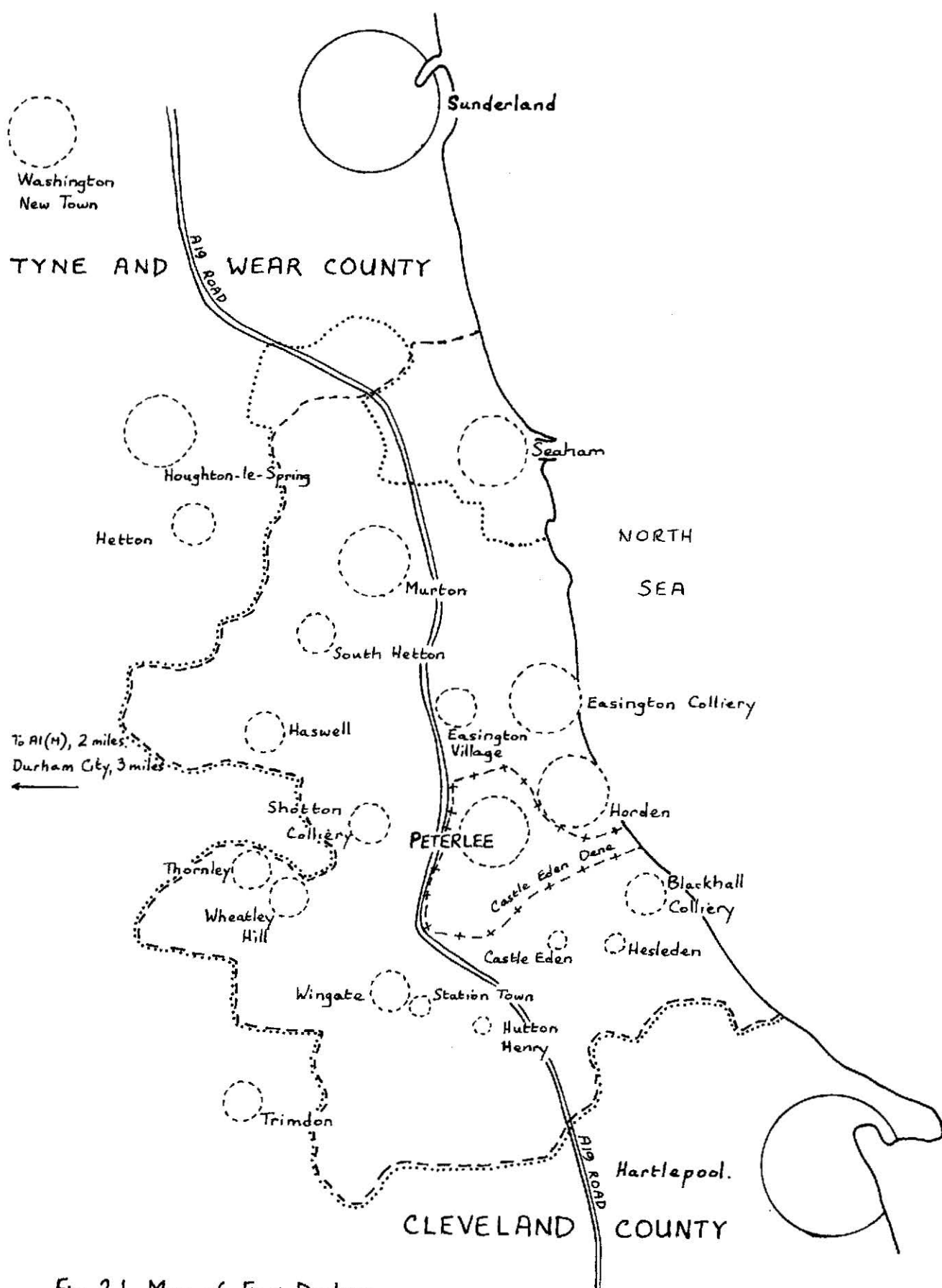


Fig. 2.1 Map of East Durham.

2. Aspects of the development of east Durham

2.1 The rise of industrialism, 1750-1850

For centuries the eastern part of County Durham was a neglected backwater of an isolated frontier region. The area's prime activity, agriculture, supported a small population clustered in tiny villages of Saxon foundation. Unlike the Tyne and Wear valleys and the western part of the county, the area did not possess readily accessible minerals; the exploitation of the coal measures of east Durham had to await advances in the technology of mining and transport.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the area was dominated by the Church at Durham, which held much of the land even after the Dissolution. This dominance strongly influenced the social structure: "the vast estates of the Prince Bishop, and of the Prior and Monks of Durham, left little space for an independent landed proprietary".⁽¹⁾ In the east, these estates were poor and unimproved and, even by the seventeenth century, had still not recovered from the decline and depopulation which had followed the Black Death.

It can be argued that the first sign of significant change in the area was marked by the arrival of the Burdon family in the 1750s. Rowland Burdon, described by the family's biographer as a "county magnate"⁽²⁾, purchased the estate and manor of Castle Eden in 1758, and consolidated his holdings by the acquisition of Horden Hall in 1767. Before his arrival, the manor of Castle Eden had been without a resident owner for at least a century and a half and the manor house and church were in ruin. Much of the parish remained unenclosed. Accordingly, Burdon improved the estate and rebuilt both the church and the manor house ("The Castle" at Castle Eden - see Plate 1).

(1) H.B. Tristram, 1902, p.3.

(2) Ibid., p.11.

Rowland Burdon Jnr., who succeeded his father in 1786, was instrumental in opening east Durham to commerce and industry. He became a Member of Parliament for Durham in 1790, but his chief interests and activities were those of a merchant and speculator. Burdon succeeded in obtaining an Act of Parliament to enable the construction of a turnpike road from Stockton-on-Tees, the family's ancestral home, to Sunderland. Sunderland had already become the second largest coal port on the east coast, exporting coal from the Wear valley pits and Rowland Burdon was anxious further to exploit its potential. Hence, he also successfully promoted a Bill for the construction of a bridge over the Wear at Sunderland, enabling the expansion of the port and facilitating the development of a road link with Newcastle. Burdon himself advanced most of the capital for the construction of Sunderland's iron bridge, opened in 1796 and later described by Fordyce as "that splendid monument of public spirit, science and taste".⁽¹⁾

Burdon was also active in a wide range of County affairs; he pioneered a local friendly society, served as Chairman of Durham Quarter Sessions and was prominent in the development of various public amenities. Nevertheless, he remained involved in commerce and retained co-partnership of the Newcastle bank founded by his father. His cousins, financed by that bank, were responsible for introducing modern manufacturing industry to the area by establishing, in 1792, a clothing factory at Castle Eden. The factory failed because a contract with the French Government was rendered worthless following the outbreak of the war with France. Burdon, through the bank, was liable to meet creditors' claims and narrowly escaped bankruptcy. He kept his estate, however, and survived until 1838 -

(1) Fordyce, 1869, p.61.

long enough to witness the rapid growth of Sunderland and Hartlepool⁽¹⁾ and the development of the east Durham coalfield.

Before the exploitation of coal in east Durham, and notwithstanding the efforts of the Burdons, the area between Sunderland and Hartlepool was still virtually untouched by the rise of capitalism elsewhere. In 1801 Easington, the largest and pre-eminent parish in the area, had only 500 inhabitants, most of whom worked on the land. By contrast, to the north the coal basins of the Tyne and Wear valleys were the scene of intense coal-mining activity.

The Great Northern Coalfield, comprising Northumberland and County Durham, had been worked for centuries and entirely monopolised the British coal trade. By 1732, Newcastle was exporting over three-quarters of a million tons of coal a year and Sunderland achieved an export total of 326,000 tons.⁽²⁾ The trade was highly developed and organised well before the nineteenth century. From the 1770s onwards formal cartel arrangements amongst colliery owners were in operation; output was held at an artificially low level by limiting "vends" in order to manipulate prices.⁽³⁾

The majority of the output was exported to the London market. Coal was brought from the pits by waggonway to riverside staiths,

- (1) One of Burdon's last acts was to promote a Parliamentary Bill for the improvement of Hartlepool harbour (in 1832). This enabled the decaying fishing port to become a major coal port by mid-century.
- (2) J.U. Neff, v.2, 1932, Appendix D.
- (3) Such arrangements, restricting supply by stipulating output targets for each coal producer, had operated from the early seventeenth century but were strengthened in the 1770s by overt price-fixing (see Sweezy, 1938).

transported by keel to the ports and then transferred to ships. The cost of long land hauls was prohibitive - hence the importance of the navigable rivers Tyne and Wear and the early exploitation of these basins. The construction of waggonways direct to the ports⁽¹⁾ and, from the 1830s, the extensive adoption of locomotives removed the dependence on inland waterways and heralded the rapid development of new coalfields.⁽²⁾

These transport improvements, coupled with increasing demand for coal, admitted the possibility of expanding the Durham coalfield. Although it had been thought that east Durham did not possess useable coal measures beneath the magnesian limestone plateau, an attempt was now made to sink a shaft through the limestone at Hetton, on the western edge of the plateau. After eight years of effort and the expenditure of considerable capital, good seams were proved and coal won at Hetton in 1822.

At this time the coal trade was dominated by a few large land-owning families,⁽³⁾ who had invested capital in opening collieries on their own estates or on land leased from the Church.⁽⁴⁾ In east Durham, the Marquis of Londonderry operated pits in the Seaham area

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- (1) This innovation, intended to break the power of the keelmen, occurred remarkably late. The first waggonway to reach Sunderland, for example, was only opened in 1815 (Corfe, 1969).
 - (2) It should be noted too, that transport innovations in the coal industry - first railways and later iron steamships - themselves stimulated increased demand for coal through the use of railways and ships in other industries and the derived demand for coal in iron and steel making.
 - (3) E.g. the Lambton, Joicey, Bowes, Pease and Londonderry families.
 - (4) The Church at Durham was a major royalty owner, receiving a large income from mining rents and wayleaves (granting easements across their land). It has been calculated that the Dean and Chapter of Durham earned £26,000 a year from mineral rights by 1865 (Sturgess, 1975, p. 12).

on the northern part of the plateau and his rival, John Lambton (later Lord Durham), had collieries on the western edge of the plateau. However, most of the new east Durham field was developed by smaller concerns - a feature which helps to explain many aspects of the subsequent development of the area.

The success at Hetton was followed by a spate of new sinkings. Within the former Easington Rural District, the collieries of South Hetton, Ludworth, Murton, Haswell, Wingate Grange, South Wingate, Castle Eden and Thornley were established during the 1830s and 1840s (Table 2.1). These pits were sunk by joint-stock companies and partnerships, several with the backing of small Northern banks.

Mining conditions were found to be more difficult than these speculators had anticipated. In some cases it took years before a workable seam was reached and technical problems overcome. Some sinkings were abandoned without producing any coal because the problems of excess water and quicksand defeated the operators or ruined their financial backers. The capital cost of a new sinking could be enormous; at Murton Colliery, probably the most difficult sinking in the area, it took five years and £400,000 before the main seam was reached.⁽¹⁾

In addition, the construction of new collieries in Durham and the development of new coalfields elsewhere, now rendered accessible by railway, threatened the stability of the trade. These competitive conditions directly led to the breakdown, in the 1840s, of the vend system because the speculators would not accede to the dictates of the old-established coal-masters. Fordyce summarised the

(1) For a fuller discussion of these difficult winnings see Galloway, 1882, ch. 18 and Moyes, 1969, ch. 7.



Plate 1 "The Castle" at Castle Eden, home of the Burdon family until the 1940s. The Castle was purchased by the N.C.B. at Nationalization and used to accommodate offices. It was later bought by Peterlee Development Corporation and now stands derelict. (Photo c.1930).



Plate 2 Castle Eden Colliery, Hesleden. Opened in 1840, this colliery was one of the first sinkings in the area and was one of the first to close. The surface buildings were dismantled in 1892 and the pit sold to Horden Collieries Ltd. in 1900. Having become flooded it served as a "water pit", supplying water to the Sunderland & South Shields Water Co.

Table 2.1 : Mining History of Easington Rural District

<u>Colliery</u>	<u>Date sunk</u>	<u>Original owners</u>	<u>Owners in 1945</u>	<u>Date Closed</u>	<u>Comments</u>
South Hetton	1831	South Hetton Coal Co.	South Hetton Coal Co.	-	
Ludworth	1830s	Thornley Coal Co.	Weardale Steel, Coal & Coke Co.	-	
Murton	1838-43	South Hetton Coal Co.	South Hetton Coal Co.	-	Now part of the larger Hawthorn combined mine, developed in the 1950s.
Haswell	1830s	Haswell Coal Co.	-	1895	
Wingate Grange	1830s	Lord Howden & Partners	Wingate Coal Co.	1962	
South Wingate	1840	Hulam Coal Co.	Horden Collieries Ltd.	1857	
Shotton Grange	1833-40	Haswell Coal Co.	Horden Collieries Ltd.	1972	Colliery closed 1876-1900 during trade depression.
Thornley	1835-7	Thornley Coal Co.	Weardale Steel, Coal & Coke Co.	1970	Closed 1884-9; owners bankrupt.
Castle Eden	1840	Messrs. Cook & Co.	Horden Collieries Ltd.	1890	
Wheatley Hill	1869	Original Hartlepool Collieries Co.	Weardale Steel, Coal & Coke Co.	1968	Closed 1884-9; owners bankrupt.
Hutton Henry	1871	Hulam Coal Co.	-	1897	
Deaf Hill	1870s	Trimdon Coal Co.	Trimdon Coal Co.	1966	
Horden	1900	Horden Collieries Ltd.	Horden Collieries Ltd.	-	
Blackhall	1909	Horden Collieries Ltd.	Horden Collieries Ltd.	-	
Easington	1910	Easington Coal Co.	Easington Coal Co.	-	

(Sources include Moyes, 1969 and Fordyce, 1859, 1860).

position thus:

"The mania for joint-stock speculations induced the formation of companies for the working of Coal in the County of Durham, and which, by prematurely and simultaneously opening out a greater number of collieries than were required by demand became profitable in themselves, and injurious to the private enterprises with which they were placed in competition. The extensive and imprudent accommodation which the banking firms in the North at that time afforded to colliery owners, also operated prejudicially to the trade."

(Fordyce, 1860, p. 105).

The advent of mining in east Durham dramatically and rapidly transformed the area. The economic and social relations of capitalism removed, and took the place of, the remnants of feudalism. Pit-heads and railways (to Sunderland, Hartlepool and Londonderry's new port at Seaham Harbour) were clear evidence of the new economic order. Hundreds of families migrated to the area for work in the pits⁽¹⁾ and pit villages were hastily built by the colliery companies. These new villages, consisting of pitmen's cottages roughly built of limestone rubble developed alongside, but separate from, the existing agricultural settlements. Living conditions in the villages reflected the character and success of the owners. On the whole, the companies were unwilling or unable to use scarce capital for housing, although they accepted the tradition that miners' housing constituted a necessary cost of production. Hence, colliery housing tended to be primitively-built and basic. The inevitably limited lives of collieries and the short-term nature of surface building leases (typically 21 years)⁽²⁾ meant that adequate or well-maintained housing appeared to be a wasteful form of expenditure.

(1) An analysis of the birthplaces of residents in one village, South Wingate, at the 1851 Census is given in Moyes, 1969, pp. 98-100.

(2) Surface leases were separate from underground mining leases. Most of the smaller companies operated by leaseholds and would attempt to keep their surface development leases to a minimum, crowding the village on to a small area. Landowners developing villages on their own estates might be more generous in their provision; indeed the Pease family, for example, built "model" villages (see Moore, 1974).

Colliery employment was settled by the notorious annual Bond, whereby pitmen were bound by contract to work at a particular pit for the following year.⁽¹⁾ By signing the Bond, men accepted the owner's regulations and received a rent-free colliery house. The working regulations gave the owners the right to impose fines - for excess stone in tubs of coal, for example. This practice led to frequent disputes and precipitated the large-scale strikes of 1810, 1831-2 and 1844 as well as many minor incidents.⁽²⁾ After the Bond had been signed, refusal to work constituted an illegal act and pitmen could be, and were, sentenced to imprisonment by magistrates who, in many cases, were themselves colliery or royalty owners. Refusal to sign the Bond led to eviction and, in several cases, the importation of strike-breakers from elsewhere. The ownership of housing thus gave owners a powerful weapon which they were by no means reluctant to use.

Colliery owners were supported by royalty owners during disputes. The Church at Durham, probably the largest royalty owner in the County, repeatedly sided with the colliery owners⁽³⁾ - Fynes (1873) pointed out that the Bishop had offered his stables to accommodate imprisoned pitmen during the 1810 strike. In east Durham the Rev. John Burdon, now head of a royalty-owning family, spoke out strongly against the pitmen during "The Great Strike" of 1844.

Finally, the dangers inherent in mining and the effect of these on the pit communities cannot be over-emphasised. The newer, deeper pits were especially prone to explosions of gas. The explosion at

(1) For an example of a Bond agreement see Fordyce, 1860, pp. 34-5.

(2) These strikes and early attempts to organise the miners are described in detail in the classic work by Richard Fynes: The Miners of Northumberland and Durham, (1873). See also Engels on "the mining proletariat" (1973 edn., pp. 278-96).

(3) This is one reason why the Established Church seems to have made little impact on the coalfield. Instead, miners turned to Methodism for both spiritual guidance and education (Moore, 1974).

Haswell Colliery, shortly after the abortive 1844 strike had ended, took the lives of 95 men and boys and received national attention. As a result of this, and similar occurrences, working conditions in the industry were considered on numerous occasions by the Government, but little was done before the second half of the nineteenth century. In any case, as Fordyce argued, the majority of accidents were of a less sensational, routine nature:

"the greater proportion of mining fatalities are found to arise from the continual occurrence of minor accidents, such as the breaking of chains or ropes, the falling of stone or coal, suffocation by gases in the pit, boiler bursting etc. These being almost every-day occurrences, and involving generally the life of only one or two persons at a time, do not attract much attention, and may frequently be traced to be the result of carelessness or inattention on the part of the manager or proprietor."

(Fordyce, 1860, p. 39)

To meet these omnipresent dangers and fight against the hardships and abuses perpetrated by the colliery owners, the pit villages had to develop organisations for mutual support. Thus, the new population, drawn from different parts of the country, had rapidly to develop "traditions" to establish a stable pattern of life. Most of these "traditions" were still, however, in embryonic form by 1850, but the latter half of the century witnessed the growth and development of organisations within the villages and within the industry. Nevertheless, the villages remained severely vulnerable to the broader conditions prevailing in the coal trade.

2.2 Dependency and Instability, 1850-1900

County Durham is ... "very little more than one huge colliery, the prosperity of which rises and falls every day with that of the commerce and manufactures of the world ... The cities, the villages, the nobility, the clergy, the tradesmen, the labourers and, we must add, the farmers in the County of Durham, all derive their wealth or their competence from Coal ..."

(The Times, Oct. 5, 1850)

Seaham Harbour, the new port created by the Marquis of Londonderry in the 1830s, was further enlarged in the mid-1840s to cope with the increasing volume of coal exports.⁽¹⁾ West Hartlepool served as a coal port for the collieries of south-east Durham and its developing shipbuilding and iron and steel activities led to the founding of a "new town" there in the mid-'fifties (Wood, 1967). Further south, Middlesbrough, an entirely new town founded by the powerful Pease family, became a centre of iron and steel making in the 1850s. The exploitation of the local Cleveland ores, as well as proximity to the coalfield, turned Middlesbrough into a boom-town - indeed, the fastest-growing town in Britain.

The latter half of the century thus witnessed the development of heavy manufacturing industry within the region and primarily at the ports, dependent upon the output of the coalfield and financed largely by the coal-masters. The consequent diversification of destinations for the investment of Northern capital led, increasingly, to the emergence of industrial combines with wide-ranging interests.

Despite the establishment of local coal-using industries and the rapid growth of the regional and national economies, the period 1850-1900 was not marked by unrelieved boom conditions in the Durham coal trade. The abolition of the Vend in 1845 and the expansion of the Durham coalfield, coupled with the opening of new coalfields (paradoxically made possible by the application of technologies originally developed in the North-East) produced an increasingly competitive trading environment.⁽²⁾ The trade was liable to

(1) See Sturgess, 1975, for a detailed account of Londonderry's career and his efforts to build Seaham Harbour.

(2) Carney *et al*, 1977. The existence of alternative investment opportunities and the competitive and uncertain nature of the coal trade also had the effect of making investment in new collieries in Durham less attractive. Only three new pits were sunk in the Easington R.D. area after 1850: Wheatley Hill, Hutton Henry and Deaf Hill.

severe recessions caused by overproduction or falling demand.

Durham was vulnerable to the vagaries of economic change experienced by other regions and other countries both because much of its coal was exported (to London and overseas markets) and also because the North East's manufacturing industries were themselves dependent upon export demand.

These dependent relationships could painfully be felt in the villages of east Durham. The coal trade collapsed in 1874 after the inflated demand produced by the Franco-Prussian war had subsided. The widespread "Great Depression"⁽¹⁾ which ensued and lasted until the late 1880s caused short working, closures and bankruptcy in coal-mining. The impact of this prolonged crisis on production and profitability varied from company to company and, hence, was felt with varying intensity in each village. The extent to which a colliery was affected depended upon the level of market demand for the type and quality of coal being produced and the existence of linkages between the colliery company and coal-using industries.

In 1877 "The Original Hartlepool Collieries Co.", owners of Thornley, Ludworth and Wheatley Hill, declared themselves bankrupt. These collieries were closed down and pitmen in these villages, unable to find work elsewhere, existed on meagre payments from their Union's relief fund. The Company succeeded in re-opening these pits in the following year but again collapsed, this time decisively, in 1884. Thornley and Wheatley Hill collieries were eventually re-opened after the Weardale Steel, Coal and Coke Co. purchased these concerns in 1889. In the meantime, however, these villages were virtually abandoned:

(1) Dobb, 1963, pp. 300-19, provides a valuable treatment of the causes and results of the Great Depression.

"For six years Wheatley Hill remained deserted, a veritable ghost town ... The population drifted away to find work in other parts of the County. Every colliery house in the village was evacuated and grass grew in the streets between the empty rows."

The same writer also noted that even when the pit was re-opened the company made little effort to improve the village; at the turn of the century Wheatley Hill still depended solely upon two taps for its water supply and sheep grazed in the overgrown streets:

"... the welfare of the village depended on the whim of the colliery viewer and that official's chief concern in life was to boost production and keep down costs. Costs included houses and streets."(1)

The experience of Wheatley Hill was repeated throughout the coalfield. Nearby, Shotton Grange remained closed for 25 years (1876-1900) and the colliery village seems never to have recovered from this long period of neglect. The South Wingate and Hutton Henry pits closed down in 1857 and 1897 respectively and the owners, the Hulam Coal Co., went into liquidation. Neither of these pits was re-opened after their take-over by Horden Collieries in 1900. By contrast, Wingate Grange, Murton and South Hetton collieries survived reasonably well, probably because of the superior quality of their coking coals and also because they were already integrated into large manufacturing combines.

Against this background of instability in the coal trade, precarious working conditions and very poor living conditions, the miners did succeed in obtaining some improvements, if only of a limited nature. They became organised into a strong and permanent

(1) These descriptions of Wheatley Hill are taken from a series of articles by J.C. Kirk in The Hartlepool Mail, 16.4.68 to 28.5.68. The publication of these articles, tracing the village's history in some detail, coincided with the (final) closure of the colliery. See also J. Wilson's "Memories of a Labour Leader" (1910) for details of Union activity in Wheatley Hill during the 1870s and 1880s.

trade union, the Durham Miners Association (D.M.A.), formed in 1869. In addition to providing some support during disputes - several of which arose from attempts to cut wages during the recession - the D.M.A. promoted welfare and relief schemes and lobbied for new legislation to improve conditions in the industry. As a result of pressure from the miners, coupled with the depressing findings of several official inquiries, Central Government responded with the 1872 Mines Regulation Act. This stipulated a number of elementary safety measures and enabled the miners to employ a check-weighman to prevent payment under-weight - a practice which had long been a source of discontent amongst the miners. In addition, the 1872 Act stated that no boy under the age of ten could be employed in a coalmine; previously, boys had usually started pit work at the age of six or seven. This improvement gave the opportunity, for the first time, of education for boys and in several villages schools were established by colliery owners, religious groups and by endowments from prominent families such as the Burdons.

Within the villages mutual support was provided by the local lodge of the D.M.A., the co-operative store - an institution which could offer support during strikes by extending credit - and the Methodist chapel. By mid-century a number of villages had built chapels by public subscription. The chapels were important as agents of social control, counteracting drinking, fighting and gambling, but also provided a valuable training ground for many of the miners' leaders.⁽¹⁾ Methodism, which nurtured an evangelistic reformism and stressed organisational strength,

(1) John Wilson and Peter Lee, for example. For a homely account of Methodism on the coalfield and a biography of one of its adherents see George Parkinson's True Stories of Durham Pit-Life (1912).

was in fact a major influence on the development of the Labour Party, steering it towards reform as opposed to revolutionary Marxism.⁽¹⁾

The villages themselves, although dependent upon the state of a national and international coal trade and the progress of a major struggle between capital and labour in the industry as a whole, existed and developed in social isolation. The villages were isolated both from each other and from the towns nearby. Nearly all activities were village-based although they were occasionally visited by union leaders, preachers and tradesmen from elsewhere. It was common for pitmen and their families to move around the coalfield for work and migration to other coalfields - or, indeed, the colonies - was not unusual. But once settled in the pit village there was little necessity - or opportunity - to go outside the village.

Living conditions in the villages continued to be poor; colliery houses were insanitary and often overcrowded. Disease was common - cholera, smallpox and enteric fever frequently broke out in the villages - and infant mortality was high. By the turn of the century they still awaited many basic services, notably a dependable and clean water supply and the provision of sewerage systems to replace the open middens. State intervention had brought some changes in working conditions but its effect on living conditions had been negligible, not least because local government was dominated by coal owners and reflected their interests. The twentieth century, however, saw the emergence of miners' leaders and a Labour Party concerned to obtain improvements. Increasingly the State, both at local and national levels, intervened to improve

(1) The moderating influence of Methodism and its dubious allegiances (revealed most clearly in its lack of support for the miners in the 1920s) are considered by Moore in Pit-men, Preachers and Politics (1974).

conditions and, at the same time, by making provision for the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force, strengthened the industry and the position of the owners. Reform, curbing the worst excesses of the owners, had a double-edged function which included the creation of conditions for continued capital accumulation and thus the survival of this vital industry.

2.3 Re-organisation, reform and depression, 1900-39

By the early twentieth century many collieries on the Durham coalfield were linked with large combines, whose interests extended from coal through to iron and steel, shipbuilding, railways, shipping lines, utilities and banks. These industrial giants also increasingly invested capital abroad, with the result that surplus value originally produced in Durham was used to finance and develop competitors overseas (Carney et.al., 1977). Within east Durham, the mergers and takeovers which had occurred during the trade depression had given birth to the new Horden Collieries Co., (formed in 1900), linked to the Dorman Long empire, and the Furness-Gainford combine which had directorate connections with the Trimdon, Wingate, South Hetton and Easington coal companies via the Weardale Steel Coal and Coke Co.⁽¹⁾ The two combines, Furness-Gainford and Dorman Long-Horden Collieries, thus controlled, at least in a corporate and often in a financial sense, all the collieries within the Easington Rural District (fig. 2.2). Further north, however, Londonderry continued to operate as an independent coal-owner and to the west the Lambton and Joicey families combined to form another powerful independent group.

(1) These connections are shown diagrammatically in Garside, 1971, pp. 56, 58. For a fuller exposition of combinations, interests and individuals in the Durham coal trade see George Harvey's Capitalism in the Northern Coal-Field (1918).

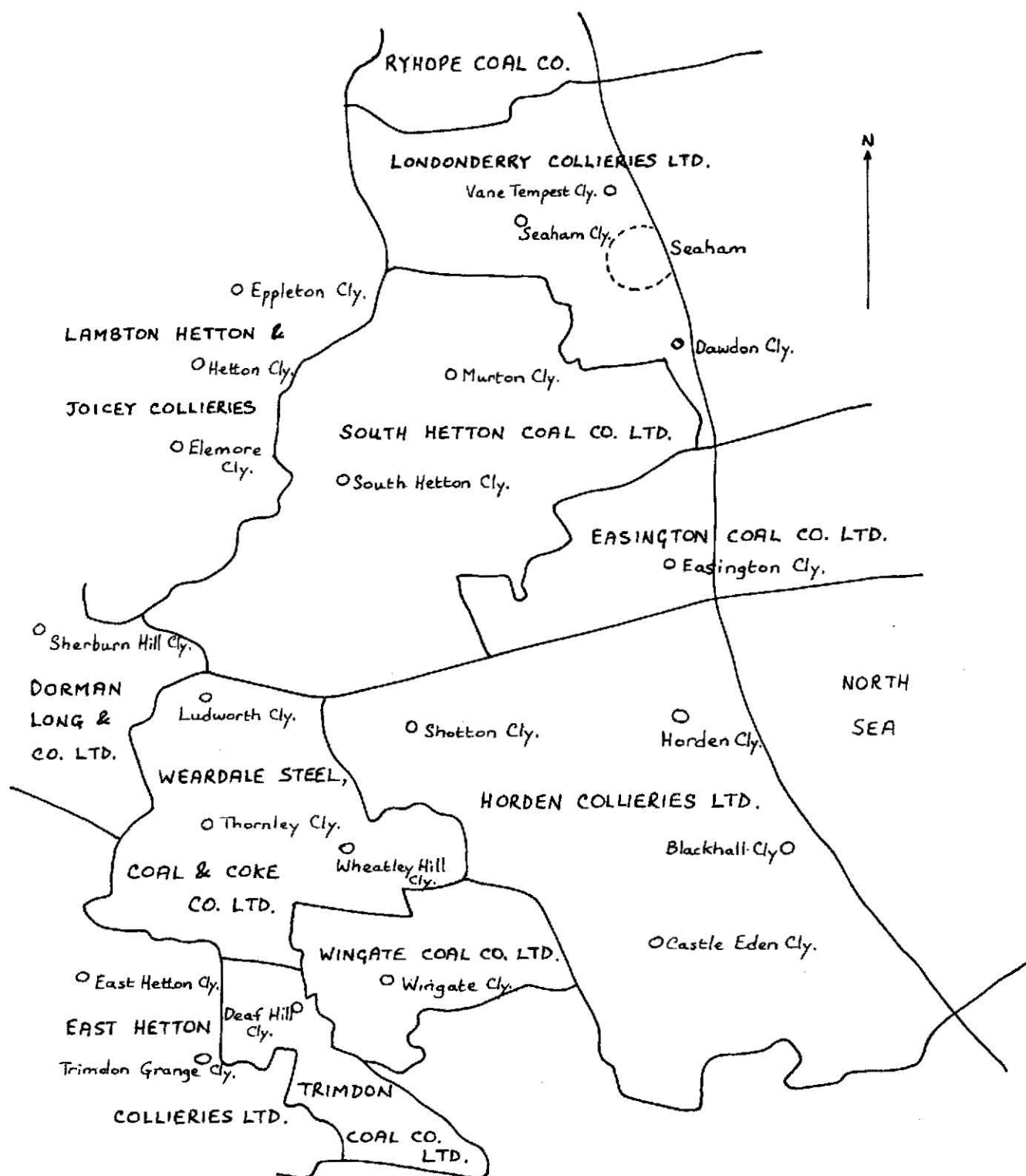


Fig. 2.2 The east Durham coalfield: collieries and royalty holdings, 1945.

0 1 2 3
miles.

Source: Appendix I of Durham Coalfield Regional Survey Report (Northern 'B' Region) by Ministry of Fuel and Power, 1945. (H.M.S.O.).

Combination led to rationalisation, resulting in the concentration of production at the newer, larger and more profitable pits. Profitability was thus restored by the creation of groups sufficiently large and capitalised to manipulate supply and thus counter the tendency to over-production.

In east Durham the coal industry was radically re-structured. Horden Collieries effectively sterilised, by ownership, several of the older pits; this company purchased Shotton Grange, Castle Eden, South Wingate and Hutton Henry collieries but only re-opened Shotton. Three new deep collieries were developed, resulting in the extension of the coalfield to the coast and allowing access to undersea reserves; Horden Collieries made sinkings at Horden (1900) and Blackhall (1909) and the new Easington Coal Co. developed a colliery at Easington in 1910. The establishment of these three collieries had a very marked impact on the coastal area which had previously seen little development. This area witnessed a "coal rush" similar to that which had occurred in the western part of the Rural District in the 1830s:

"Well they decided that they would bore for coal. And they found coal. Therefore the wheels were set in motion and they brought in men who were called 'sinkers', who had to sink the shafts... and they lived in wood huts. And then the Horden Coal Company started to build houses. The building contractor was Henry Bell - and I've heard it said that at the end of the year he'd built 365 houses in 365 days ... and he built all of Horden as Horden was." (Mr. D. Larmer, A.P.P., 2.5.76).(1)

New pit villages were rapidly developed at Horden (see Plates 3 and 4), Easington (see Plate 5) and Blackhall. Miners and their families came to the new pits not only from other parts of the

(1) This is an extract from an interview conducted by the Artist Project Peterlee (A.P.P.). The Project, which began in 1976, is funded by the Manpower Services Commission and operates under the auspices of Peterlee Development Corporation. Its main activity has been to collect reminiscences and old photographs to build up a picture of what the villages close to Peterlee were like in the past. We acknowledge A.P.P.'s assistance in making these interviews and photographs available.

County - including, of course, the western villages of the Rural District - but also from other coalfields. This influx of population is described by an eye-witness who moved into First Street, Horden as a child in 1904:

"It was a flat cart, you know, two horses and a cart; that was how we came /to Horden/ ...

When we first came she /respondent's mother/ never liked it ... And she used to say 'Ee, they're all foreigners here', because there were Yorkshiremen, Welshmen, Lancashiremen, there was all sorts. And every day there was a load, a fresh load, came in. And in fact the builders were hardly finished, you know; they were finishing off the houses as people were moving in ..." (Mrs. Turner, A.P.P., 15.7.76).

The development of these new colliery villages meant that the "centre of gravity" of the area's population shifted eastwards during the first two decades of the century. These modern, large-scale collieries were viable concerns with relatively good prospects; to the west the smaller, older and undercapitalised collieries had a more limited and unstable future. The prosperity of east Durham came increasingly to depend upon the success of the coastal collieries and the development of the area during the twentieth century has closely reflected and acknowledged this.

The construction of the new villages at Horden, Easington and Blackhall was largely undertaken by speculative builders who then leased the houses to the colliery companies. In the past the companies themselves had built houses; this new arrangement had the advantage to the companies of enabling them to avoid a substantial initial capital outlay and at the same time offered a relatively secure investment for speculative builders and the Building Societies which backed them. Builders were subject only to the minimal controls of bye-laws, Public Health and Housing Acts imposed by the Rural District Council - which, in the period before the First World War was still largely dominated by



Plate 3 Fifth Street, Horden c.1910. In only a decade Horden had become a substantial colliery village.



Plate 4 Blackhills Terrace, Horden, 1913.

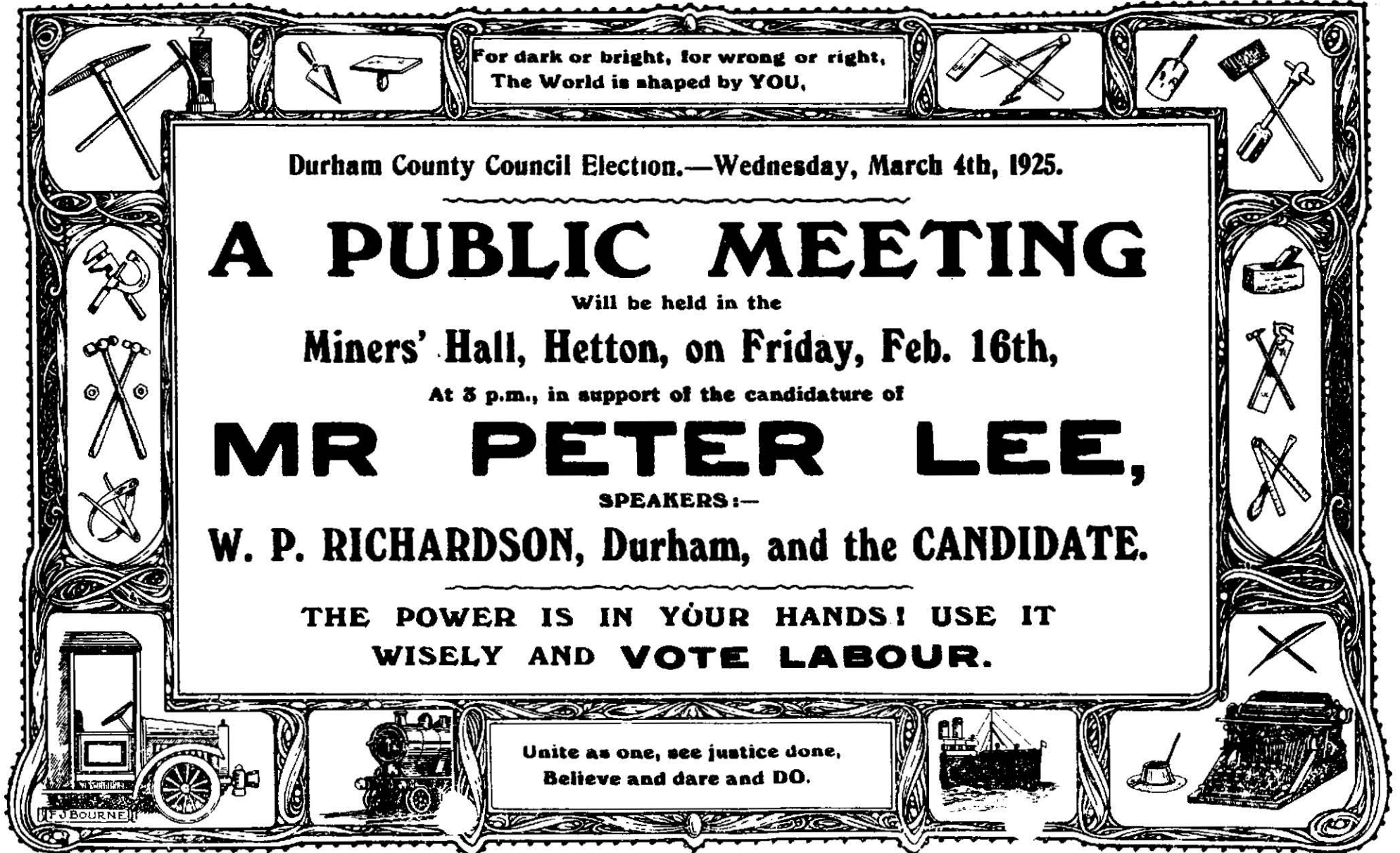


Plate 5 Sinkers' huts at Easington Colliery, c.1910.

representatives of the colliery owners. The shortcomings of this control, resting almost completely on sanitary concerns, are illustrated by the fact that the new villages did not represent a major improvement on the existing pit villages. It was still justifiable to argue, along with the miners' leaders, that the housing provided for miners reflected the low regard which colliery owners had for their employees; the involvement of speculative builders and the introduction of building controls did not significantly alter the position.

In some respects housing conditions did, in fact, deteriorate. The population of the Rural District increased from 40,000 in 1900 to 70,000 by 1914 but house-building did not keep pace with this increase. Overcrowding was the inevitable consequence of this housing shortage. In the case of Shotton, where the colliery had re-opened and expanded its labour force, the situation was especially severe and was exacerbated by the demand for lodgings from those employed at the developing pits nearby. In 1915 one-third of that village's 156 two-roomed houses contained between 7 and 14 people (Moyes, 1969, pp. 136-7). The problem was made worse by Shotton's legacy of neglect from the years during which the colliery had been closed and the village abandoned.

In east Durham, as elsewhere, State intervention via the Local Authority in the field of housing provision increasingly became a necessity on account of the failure of the private sector to meet housing needs. An important pre-condition for the extension of Easington R.D.C.'s role in housing was the emergence of miners' leaders, frequently Methodists and members of the newly-formed Labour Party, who were elected to serve on Parish Councils and the R.D.C., gradually supplanting the colliery owners' nominees. One



For dark or bright, for wrong or right,
The World is shaped by YOU,

Durham County Council Election.—Wednesday, March 4th, 1925.

A PUBLIC MEETING

Will be held in the

Miners' Hall, Hetton, on Friday, Feb. 16th,

At 3 p.m., in support of the candidature of

MR PETER LEE,

SPEAKERS:—

W. P. RICHARDSON, Durham, and the CANDIDATE.

THE POWER IS IN YOUR HANDS! USE IT
WISELY AND **VOTE LABOUR.**

Unite as one, see justice done,
Believe and dare and DO.

of the most famous of these local pitmen-politicians was Peter Lee; he had been check-weighman at Wheatley Hill and had then risen through the ranks from Parish Council Chairman to member of Easington R.D.C. and, in 1919 became chairman of Durham County Council - the first Labour-controlled County Council in Britain.⁽¹⁾ Lee and other miners' leaders used local councils as agencies for reform, most especially as a means to bring about improvements in living conditions in the pit villages (Plate 6).

Although working-class representation on the Easington R.D.C. was in the minority before the First World War, some improvements were instigated. The first sewerage systems and a number of water closets were installed in the District and, a few months before the outbreak of war, the R.D.C. completed its first Council houses. It appears that the colliery companies were increasingly aware of the advantages of leaving the Council with the responsibility of housing their labour forces - especially since their power of eviction had become a politically unacceptable weapon - and hence the interests of the companies and the aspirations of miners' leaders coincided in this area of Council policy.

After the war the R.D.C. was faced with severe housing problems and sought to take advantage of the growing willingness of Central Government to support Council house-building. In 1918 the Council's Housing Committee sent a deputation to the Local Government Board to request approval and assistance for housing schemes. The deputation described some of the area's housing problems:

(1) See Jack Lawson's biography of Peter Lee, particularly chs. 15 and 20.

"The Easington Rural District ... is composed of a few small agricultural villages and eleven large collieries. Eight of the collieries were opened up from 50 to 85 years ago and a large number of houses were hurriedly built of limestone without damp proof courses, little regard being paid to ground level or sanitation ... the rooms on the ground floor are very low, with very low ill-ventilated attics above. Some of these houses are in grossly unsanitary condition which must be seen to understand the evil effects they have on the tenants' health and spirits.

The three new collieries on the coast, Horden, Easington and Blackhall have fairly modern houses, but these do not possess a private bathroom with hot and cold water service. These houses are built in parallel streets with the minimum street widths, there are scarcely any gardens and too many houses are built per acre. In some cases 35 houses are crowded on the acre. There are no green spaces left; consequently the clothes must be dried in the street and the children play in the gutter.

These three newest villages in the district leave much to be desired from the point of view of health, architecture and beauty."(1)

In the event, the Council received permission to build 500 houses. This proved to be the beginning of an impressive series of Council house schemes; in the inter-war period the R.D.C. built over 4,500 houses - an average of some 220 houses a year.(2)

The history of Council housing in the area, as told in the Minutes of the Housing Committee, makes it clear that the Council successfully pursued a vigorous housing policy despite many difficulties. One problem which repeatedly threatened the housing programme was the uncertainty of subsidies caused by the continual revision of Government policy and legislation. A further obstacle was the refusal of some landowners to sell land at a "reasonable price"; the Council was thus held back because it did not possess compulsory purchase powers. The Council's finances were stretched to the limit although, significantly, some valuable help was received

(1) Easington R.D.C. Housing Cttee. Minutes, Nov. 1918 (Durham County Records Office, deposit RD/Ea 78-).

(2) Ibid., March 1943.

in the form of loans from the colliery companies.⁽¹⁾ In addition, Council tenants found difficulty in meeting rents; this problem was made worse by the fact that many of the Council's tenants were low-paid colliery surface-workers because, under conditions of housing shortage, companies allocated colliery housing primarily to the most important part of their labour force - the better-paid underground workers.⁽²⁾

In the 1920s the Government made attempts to stimulate house-building in the private rented sector (see ch. I, section 2.4) but in east Durham, as in other parts of the country, these efforts were unsuccessful. Colliery owners refused to build houses to rent (i.e. to let rent-free as part of the miner's wage). Garside (1971, p. 289) maintains that the main reason for this reluctance was that companies feared that the industry would be Nationalized - as had been recommended by the Sankey Commission of 1919 - and this in itself discouraged all available investment. It is also clear that without the possibility of using eviction as a means to settle disputes, the companies saw no advantages - but many disadvantages - in building (or undertaking to lease from speculative builders) colliery housing.

The colliery companies did, however, build some private housing for owner-occupation, mainly in the newer coastal villages. These were known as "Scheme houses" and were mortgaged by the

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- (1) R.D.C. Housing Committee minutes make reference to loans from the Marquis of Londonderry for house building at his collieries in the Seaham area (at that time included within Easington R.D.) and loans from the Easington Coal Co.
 - (2) By tradition colliery houses were rent-free; those living in other accommodation received an allowance in lieu - but this amounted to less than half the Council house rent.

company to miners who then made mortgage repayments, deducted from their pay-notes. As far as the companies were concerned the Scheme houses had the advantage of qualifying for considerable subsidies both from the Exchequer and the R.D.C. (under the provisions of the 1923 Chamberlain Act); the arrangement freed them of responsibilities for maintenance and so on and they were also a profitable investment relatively free of the risk of take-over in the event of Nationalization. To the miners the Scheme houses could be an expensive liability. One ex-miner noted that "they were well-named because you had to scheme to live"⁽¹⁾; men could not risk being off work because arrears in repayments would mount up and then have to be met, deducted directly from the pay-note. Miners themselves did not regard the Scheme houses as a means of attaining the status of owner-occupiers; indeed, many seemed to have believed that they were paying rent - hence, many Scheme houses were merely abandoned or "sold" for a few shillings (i.e. the mortgage was transferred to someone else) when people moved away.

In 1930 the withdrawal of subsidies, except for the building of rented housing, put an end to the development of Scheme houses. On several occasions the R.D.C. attempted to interest the colliery companies in building rented housing but met with a negative response; they maintained that "given the present state of the trade, they were unable to release capital for housing."⁽²⁾ The colliery companies were, no doubt, quite prepared to leave the responsibility of housing provision to the State.

(1) Mr. A. Allen, A.P.P. Mr. Allen pointed out that the direct deduction of the repayments meant that a man who had been off work might return to the pit and "work for maybes a fortnight and didn't get any money at all". It can be argued that the Scheme houses had a subsidiary function of social control - discouraging, in particular, stoppages of work.

(2) Easington R.D.C., Housing Committee minutes, June 1932.

Meanwhile, and in the context of formidable financial difficulties, the R.D.C. continued to build Council houses. The 1930 Housing Act provided them with new slum clearance powers, leading to the formation of a Slum Clearance Committee and the preparation of clearance and re-housing schemes. The 1935 Housing Act added a further stimulus by providing powers to deal with overcrowding. In connection with the 1935 Act surveys were undertaken which showed that Durham ranked as the County with the highest percentage of working-class families overcrowded in the country (Garside, 1971, p. 287). A local survey conducted by Easington R.D.C. showed that, out of about 20,000 houses in the Rural District,

"970 houses were overcrowded as regards the number of rooms and occupants, 973 were overcrowded because of people of opposite sexes over 10 years of age and not being married having to sleep in the same room; and 939 houses were overcrowded on account of both of these conditions; making a total of 2,882 houses overcrowded in the district." (1)

Aside from this, there was also a number of families and individuals living in makeshift accommodation - in huts on the allotments and even in caves in the denes. The scale and severity of the housing problem, especially acute in the older villages where badly-built colliery houses were now nearly a century old and beginning to collapse, was sufficient to justify the designation of over 100 slum clearance schemes by 1939.

Easington R.D.C.'s house-building efforts were supplemented by those of the North-East Housing Association, established under the auspices of the Commissioner for the Special Areas in 1935.

(1) Ibid., September 1935.

The Association built 800 houses to rent before the outbreak of war and thus reduced the financial burden on the R.D.C. and expedited the housing programme. Most of the new housing was built in the older villages to rehouse those displaced by slum clearance; the coastal villages received little housing principally because Government subsidies were available only for cases of slum clearance. Hence, whilst housing conditions improved in the western villages the eastern villages still suffered a severe housing shortage - a fact which was to have important ramifications after the war.

The disinterest of the colliery companies in housing matters is well illustrated by the case of the "Cornwall" district of Murton. The owners, the South Hetton Colliery Co., initially expressed their intention to recondition the 500 wretched colliery houses at Cornwall but subsequently announced that this would be "uneconomic", leaving it to the R.D.C. to take "whatever action it feels fit".⁽¹⁾ The R.D.C. then scheduled the whole area for clearance and took responsibility for re-housing; again the State took over the function with which the company refused to be burdened.

By the Second World War significant improvements had been made in the villages largely through the efforts of the Labour Party and the broadening intervention of the State. Easington R.D.C. had done much to improve standards of public health by installing sewerage services which had now become available to the majority of houses in the area. The State had become the major landlord with 4,743 Council houses and 802 houses provided by the North-East Housing Association, as compared with a total

(1) Ibid., May 1939.

of 5,401 colliery houses.⁽¹⁾ In addition, some basic recreational and social facilities had been provided, financed by a welfare fund which was made up of output levies charged to colliery and royalty owners. This levy had been imposed by the Government in 1920 following the Sankey Commission inquiry: it was the only significant gain the miners received as a result of the Commission.

The much more important recommendation that the industry be Nationalized was unacceptable to the Government and the interests which it protected.

Although some improvements had been won, the inter-war period witnessed recurrent crises in the coal industry - upon which east Durham almost entirely depended - and the consequent impoverishment of the miners. The Durham coalfield as a whole reached its peak in output at the beginning of the First World War but, largely because of under-investment and gradual exhaustion of reserves on the older parts of the coalfield, productivity had been falling since the 1880s. Thus, when employment reached its peak shortly after the war, total output was already declining. The effect of the ending of the war-time boom and the abrupt termination of the reconstruction effort on the coal industry - and on the region's other staple industries - was exacerbated by the growth of overseas competitors which led to the loss of export markets. The Durham coalfield, highly dependent upon export demand, experienced the collapse of its markets in the mid-twenties and suffered almost unrelieved recession until re-armament in the late 1930s. Allied

(1) These figures are for April 1946 (but few additions were made during the war) and are taken from Clarke, 1947, Table 5. There were also 9,252 owner-occupied houses and 312 tied agricultural houses in the Rural District.

to this fundamental crisis in demand were the colliery owners' attempts to restore the viability of the industry by wage-cutting, which led to the stoppages of 1921 and 1926. The miners' slogan "not a minute on the day, not a penny off the pay" was defeated and wage-cuts were enforced - resulting in considerable hardship and not producing the desired effect of reviving the industry. The abortive 1926 strike made a severe impact on the coalfield and so too did the subsequent wage cuts. A contemporary report pointed to the inability of the area to recover from this defeat:

"In the stoppage of 1926 the families were bared to the bone: savings exhausted, humble possessions sold, clothing worn out, debts incurred. The past year has brought nothing back. Even when the miner is in regular work his wages, on the standard basis, are below the acknowledged subsistence level. The victory of the owners in 1926 was disastrously complete." (1)

In addition to reductions in wages, the coalfield experienced considerable unemployment, but the more modern and efficient coastal collieries did not suffer this to the same extent as the older undercapitalised collieries to the west. Even within Easington R.D. the incidence of unemployment varied considerably. The western part of the R.D., covered by Haswell Labour Exchange, recorded an unemployment rate of 41% at the bottom of the slump in 1932, as compared with a regional rate of 37% and a national rate of 22%. Further east, the Wingate Exchange had 28% unemployment whilst Horden Exchange, which included the three new collieries, had an unemployment rate of only 6%. Wages were, of course, low - "below the acknowledged subsistence level" - for those in work and these figures conceal the effects of extensive short-time working and sharp seasonal fluctuations.

(1) New Statesman, 31.12.27, quoted in Garside, 1971, p. 275. See also Newsom (1936) and Hannington (1937) for accounts of conditions in Durham during the depression.

It is, however, clear that the coastal collieries survived the slump relatively well - indeed, Horden Collieries Ltd. was one of the few coal companies which paid dividends to shareholders in the 1920s and 1930s (Garside, 1971, p.60). Nonetheless, even these collieries had to face the effects of falling demand. Whilst the market for coking coal - produced cheaply by the Horden and Blackhall collieries - held up fairly well, demand for steam coal declined. Thus Easington Colliery, which produced steam coal, was forced to close; the hopelessness of the situation and the extreme dependence upon external factors is well summarised by an ex-miner from that colliery:

"We carried on till 1933, then the pit closed and we were put on the dole; that was just like the strike - wandering about again, you couldn't get a job nowhere. We used to go turnip snatching or helping the farmers if they wanted anybody to haymake."

Interviewer: "What was the reason for the closure, Tom?"

"The coal ... they wanted a certain class of coal ... they didn't want steam coal because the ships had changed over from coal to diesel ... and this main seam produced steam coal ... so they closed it."

(Mr. T. Garside, A.P.P., 2.9.76).

In east Durham there were few alternatives to mining; boys hoped for work at the pit whilst girls remained at home or sought domestic service elsewhere. Moyes (1969, p.144) remarks that "the security of a job with the local co-operative came to represent the height of general ambition" and the few who succeeded in obtaining education found it necessary to leave the area. In fact, many people sought to escape unemployment by leaving the area; an estimated 6,000 people left the Easington R.D. during the 1930s (Clarke, 1947, p. 23). The unemployed and the migrants represented a population which was now surplus to the requirements of the mining industry.

Some of the unemployed were encouraged to move away through labour transference schemes operated under the "Special Areas" legislation. But the designation of Durham as a Special Area generally had little effect particularly since efforts were largely directed towards relieving the situation in especially hard-pressed areas in the west of the county (i.e. the oldest part of the coalfield). East Durham received little assistance apart from housing built by the North-East Housing Association; work was not brought to the unemployed workers. Regional policy was clearly seen to be ineffective, whilst social service and relief schemes hardly began even to tackle the symptoms of the crisis. The need was for work for the unemployed and reasonable pay and benefits. Towards the end of the 1930s re-armament revived the coalfield but did not remove its fundamental economic weaknesses nor did it change living and working conditions; State initiatives to attempt to deal with some of these underlying problems had to wait until after the war.

This section concludes with J.B. Priestley's perceptions of the area, which he visited in the course of his English Journey in 1933. Here the sense of neglect, physical decay and exploitation is conveyed, not without a sense of outrage:

"... The first impression of my own that was instantly confirmed was that of the strange isolation of this mining community. Nobody ... goes to East Durham. The miner there lives in his own little world and hardly ever meets anybody from outside it.

Even in East Durham, this village of Shotton is notorious ... If I had been completely alone when I saw it I think that now I should be accusing myself of creating a weird Shotton fantasy, as a symbol of greedy, careless, cynical, barbaric industrialism. ... Imagine ... a village consisting of a few shops, a public-house, and a clutter of dirty little houses, all at the base of what looked at first like an active volcano. This volcano was the notorious Shotton "tip", literally a man-made smoking hill ... The "tip" itself towered to the sky and its vast dark bulk, steaming and smoking at various levels, blotted out all the landscape at the back of the village. Its lowest slope was only a few yards from the miserable clutter of houses ...

There must have been a lot of labour put into the ground and a lot of wealth taken out of it before that "tip" began to darken the sky and poison the air ...

No doubt it was fortunate for England that you could dig down at Shotton and find coal. But it did not seem to have been very fortunate for Shotton ...

All this part of Durham, I reflected, had done very well in its time for somebody, but not, somehow, for itself ..."

(J.B. Priestley, English Journey , 1934, Ch. 10.)



Plate 7 Mechanics at Shotton Colliery, 1920.



Plate 8 Coke-cutting and screening plant at Shotton Colliery, 1928.



Plate 9 Hand cleaning belts at Blackhall, 1929.



Plate 10 Shotton Colliery, 1936.



Plate 11 Men underground at Murton Colliery
(probably c.1940).

3. Peterlee - from conception to designation

3.1 "Centralised development": a New Town for miners.

The outbreak of the Second World War revived the coal industry and reversed, temporarily, the fortunes of the Durham coalfield. The national emergency made it apparent that the coalfields were vital to the nation's war effort. Collieries were worked to full capacity for the first time since the First World War and east Durham, together with other coalfield areas, once again experienced full employment.

The efforts of the Easington R.D.C. to improve the district were brought to a standstill by the war. Council house building ceased altogether, but the Council's enthusiasm had not diminished. Indeed, the ending of the years of depression had given them renewed hope for the future. In common with other Local Authorities in the former "depressed areas", the R.D.C. looked forward to realising the possibilities offered by the promise of a new post-war Britain.

Early in 1943, the Ministry of Health requested⁽¹⁾ Local Authorities to assess their post-war housing needs and prepare a one-year housing programme for immediate implementation after the war. Accordingly, Easington R.D.C. convened a sub-committee to prepare a one-year programme and formulate the Council's longer-term post-war development strategy. The committee agreed that all villages were suffering from a housing shortage and that this was likely to intensify after the war. Each village therefore had a strong claim for new Council housing and there would be considerable rivalry amongst the villages for a share of the

(1) Ministry of Health, Circular 2778, March 1943.

allocation. Hence, it was agreed that, to avoid argument, every village would receive some houses, the number being proportionate to the size of the village.⁽¹⁾

This agreement was sufficient to form the basis of the first year's development but came to be regarded as inadequate as a longer term strategy. C.W. Clarke, the Council's architect-surveyor, proposed that in future new development should occur only at a few chosen sites. He maintained that it was irrational to add new houses to villages where the colliery had a short life or had already been closed. Such villages did not possess the economic base, the environmental conditions or the social amenities to warrant their redevelopment and expansion. Consequently, Clarke argued for the construction of

"Central housing estates on a large scale to serve several villages in the vicinity, rather than a continuation of this sporadic building of a smaller number of houses in each and every village." (2)

The sub-committee supported this view and recommended its further consideration. This is not surprising; it was, after all, a central tenet of popular planning orthodoxy that "sprawl" and "ribbon development" were to be avoided. Between the wars, the Council had become aware of the problems of urban development, had witnessed the advent of town-planning legislation and come into contact with the process of planning through the East Durham Joint Planning Committee. The idea of several new planned estates able to offer facilities which the old villages were unable to provide was immediately attractive and appeared eminently reasonable.

(1) Easington R.D.C. Housing Cttee., Minutes, March 1943.

(2) Ibid., June 1943.

Clarke then produced a fuller report, outlining his ideas and suggesting four possible sites - in various parts of the district - for such central estates. In August 1943 the full housing Committee accepted Clarke's ideas in principle. The Clerk to the Council, perhaps summarising the views of many members on this occasion, said that such a scheme

"would prove the solution to the whole of the Council's post-war programme and, drastic though it may seem at the outset, particularly in what would appear to be the elimination of parochial ideas, he was convinced that if it was launched and brought to an accomplished fact (and this would probably take 15 or 20 years) then those who were fortunate enough to reap its benefits would look back and shower blessings upon their benefactors, who had the foresight and courage to take such a step in the interests of housing progress." (1)

The scheme was gradually re-defined and it became clear that only one large estate was to be developed.⁽²⁾ In February 1944, the full Council supported the principle of "centralised development upon one suitable site in the district", but left the actual question of its site undecided. In the ensuing discussions it was found that the "parochial ideas" of councillors had not been eliminated; each Parish staked its claim for the new development.

Immediately after the war the Council embarked on its agreed programme of house building in the villages⁽³⁾ but the longer term scheme was not forgotten. In fact, events in national politics, coupled with the general enthusiasm for innovative and idealistic solutions, increased its appeal and also its likelihood of success.

The newly-elected Labour Government expressed a commitment to

(1) Ibid., Aug. 1943.

(2) Steele (1962) considers that the initial advocacy of several sites was Clarke's compromise to re-assure members from the constituent parishes that they would not be left without new housing. The single site development was, however, Clarke's ideal solution.

(3) Comprising 800 permanent and 416 temporary houses to be built over a two-year period.

large-scale public sector reconstruction schemes and full employment. The New Towns Committee was appointed to provide legislation to help realise the former commitment and the Government pressed ahead with plans for the Nationalization of several declining industries to maintain output and employment. Labour Local Authorities such as the Easington R.D.C. were, no doubt, elated by the rapid succession of new legislation in the first years after the war which greatly extended the domain of the public sector.

The idea of developing New Towns was particularly well received by Local Authorities in the North-East. The earlier, albeit very limited, experience of Trading Estates had introduced a form of industrial re-development which had been applied with some success and New Towns logically extended this idea, combining the Trading Estate concept with housing. Even after the introduction of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, which gave Local Authorities considerable new powers of development control, the New Towns were regarded as an especially appropriate and promising means of re-planning and re-developing the region. Further support for this view was given by Pepler and MacFarlane in their Outline Plan for the North-East,⁽¹⁾ prepared between 1946 and 1949; in fact, their Plan recommended the establishment of several New Towns within the region. In addition, and at a more general level, Durham County Council was working towards a planning strategy based on the principle of remodelling the County's population distribution and concentrating population at larger, viable centres - ideally, New Towns - a strategy which eventually emerged in the County Development Plan (1951) and was there expressed in the 'D' villages policy (see ch. III, section 2.2).

(1) Sir George Pepler and P.W. MacFarlane were commissioned by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning to formulate a strategic plan for the North-East Development Area. Their report was subsequently shelved and they got no further than the production, in 1949, of an "Interim Confidential Edition" of an Outline Plan - which is the document referred to here.

Another contextual element of no less significance was the Nationalization and re-organisation of the coal mining industry. The long-awaited Nationalization of the industry took place on January 1st 1947, at a time when increased coal output was a requirement of major importance to the post-war reconstruction effort. During 1946 the Government had been made aware of the problems which held back coal production and thus threatened the reconstruction effort; above all, the industry was suffering from chronic under-investment⁽¹⁾ but also a shortage of manpower. Investment and rationalisation were regarded as necessarily long-term concerns whilst an increase in manpower was seen as an immediate consideration in pursuit of a policy of "coal at any price". It became clear that the difficulties experienced in recruiting miners - and attracting miners back to the pits after the war - centred as much on living conditions as on working conditions. During 1946 the question of recruitment was, at the invitation of the Minister of Fuel and Power, the subject of serious consideration by the National Executive Committee of the National Union of Mineworkers. From this emerged "The Miners Charter", a document which succinctly covered twelve major recommendations for improvements which would increase recruitment by offering "conditions of employment which compare favourably with those offered in other industries, and a higher standard of living than has been the lot of those who have toiled in the industry in the past". One of the stated proposals called for

"The building of new towns and villages of a high standard and situated at places calculated to enable miners to have increased opportunities for social facilities and to break down the segregation of mineworkers and their families from the rest of the community, accompanied by the provision of adequate services at reasonable rates."

(1) Garside (1971, p. 390) notes that, in 1948, the estimated net fixed capital per employee in coal mining was only £100, compared with a figure of £1,080 per employee in British industry as a whole.

Thus the miners added their support to the idea of New Towns as a means to secure better living conditions and, in view of the problems with which it was faced, the Government was prepared to implement this and other measures to ensure production.

This background - post-war idealism, a consensus on planning issues and, perhaps most important, the need to increase coal output - goes a long way towards explaining why the scheme for "centralised development" put forward by Easington R.D.C. not only gained support but also came to be transformed into a proposal for a New Town, to be established under the New Towns Act. But consideration of the way in which this transformation took place demonstrates, also, the major role of C.W. Clarke, the Council's architect-surveyor, and points to the origins of some of the difficulties which the New Town later had to tackle.

3.2 "Farewell Squalor"

Following Easington R.D.C.'s acceptance of the idea of a large-scale single site development, C.W. Clarke prepared a detailed Outline Survey for a "new town" in the District. This report was submitted to the R.D.C. in December 1946 and was unanimously supported by the full Council. In March 1947, the Outline Survey was revised and published under the title "Farewell Squalor".⁽¹⁾

Previously Clarke had been aware of the appointment of the Reith Committee and had urged the Council to approach the Ministry of Town and Country Planning with a view to obtaining their advice and perhaps their support for the scheme. In fact, the Ministry's

(1) A title possibly inspired by the wartime reports by Lord Beveridge on social security. Beveridge noted, in words that were often subsequently repeated, that there were "five giant obstacles in the path of social reconstruction"; "Squalor" was one of these obstacles.

regional office assisted Clarke in the preparation of the Outline Survey and Sir George Pepler, the Ministry's consultant on the North-East Development Area Plan, provided the foreword to "Farewell Squalor". Whilst it is unclear how far the Ministry assisted Clarke (see Steele, 1962, ch.2) it would appear that the Ministry did offer a measure of support and that their involvement at this stage helped ensure the eventual success of the scheme. However, Clarke's personal commitment and contribution should not be underestimated. A former R.D.C. Councillor and Corporation Board Member recently put forward a view of Clarke as almost entirely responsible for the New Town's establishment:

"I spent time with Mr. Clarke in his office; there I saw and listened to a man of drive, vision - a dreamer as some might say, but of deep dedication, giving himself completely To the question of 'Why a New Town', I answer because of Mr. C.W. Clarke; had it not been for his drive, vision and dedication, Peterlee New Town would not have been. He and he alone must be credited its birth."

(Mr. H. O'Neill, A.P.P., 28.9.76).

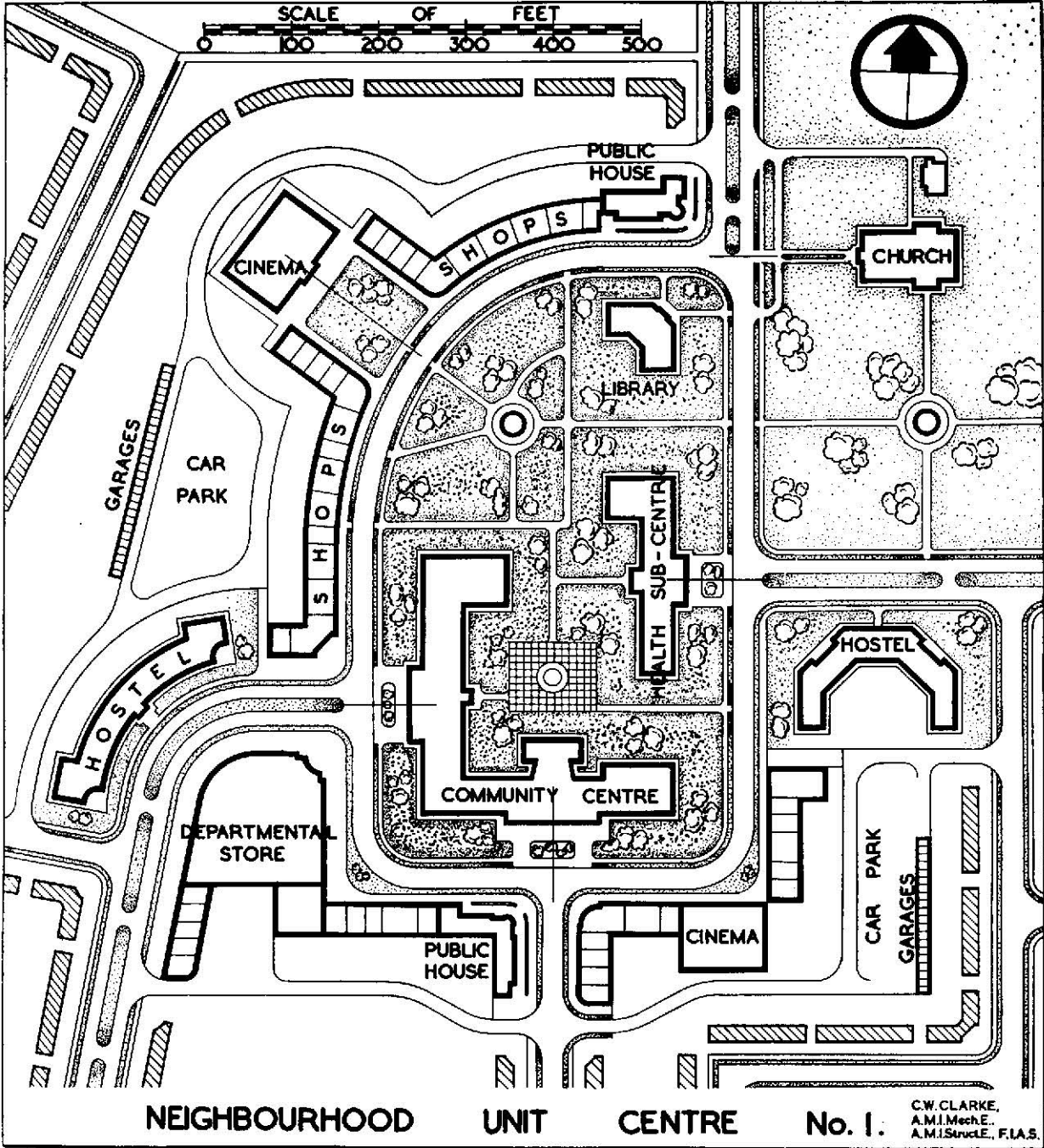
Clarke was an idealist and to some degree an eccentric. He provided the vision, the Utopian element which, as we have seen, is commonly a component of substantial importance in communitarian ventures. He could visualise and describe this brave new future. It is relevant also to note that shortly after Peterlee's designation Clarke left the Council and became a priest.

"Farewell Squalor" is an impressive and fascinating pamphlet. It begins with a description of the social and economic characteristics of the area, setting out in detail the existing provision of employment, housing, services and so on. Several photographs are included showing slums and sub-standard housing in the District. From this evidence it is concluded that the ideal solution to the area's very considerable problems would be a new town, providing

not only new housing but also new industries and better services. Having regard to the subsequent lack of industrial development at Peterlee, Clarke's arguments for new industry (Ibid., pp. 61-2) are particularly important; these are discussed in chapter IV below.

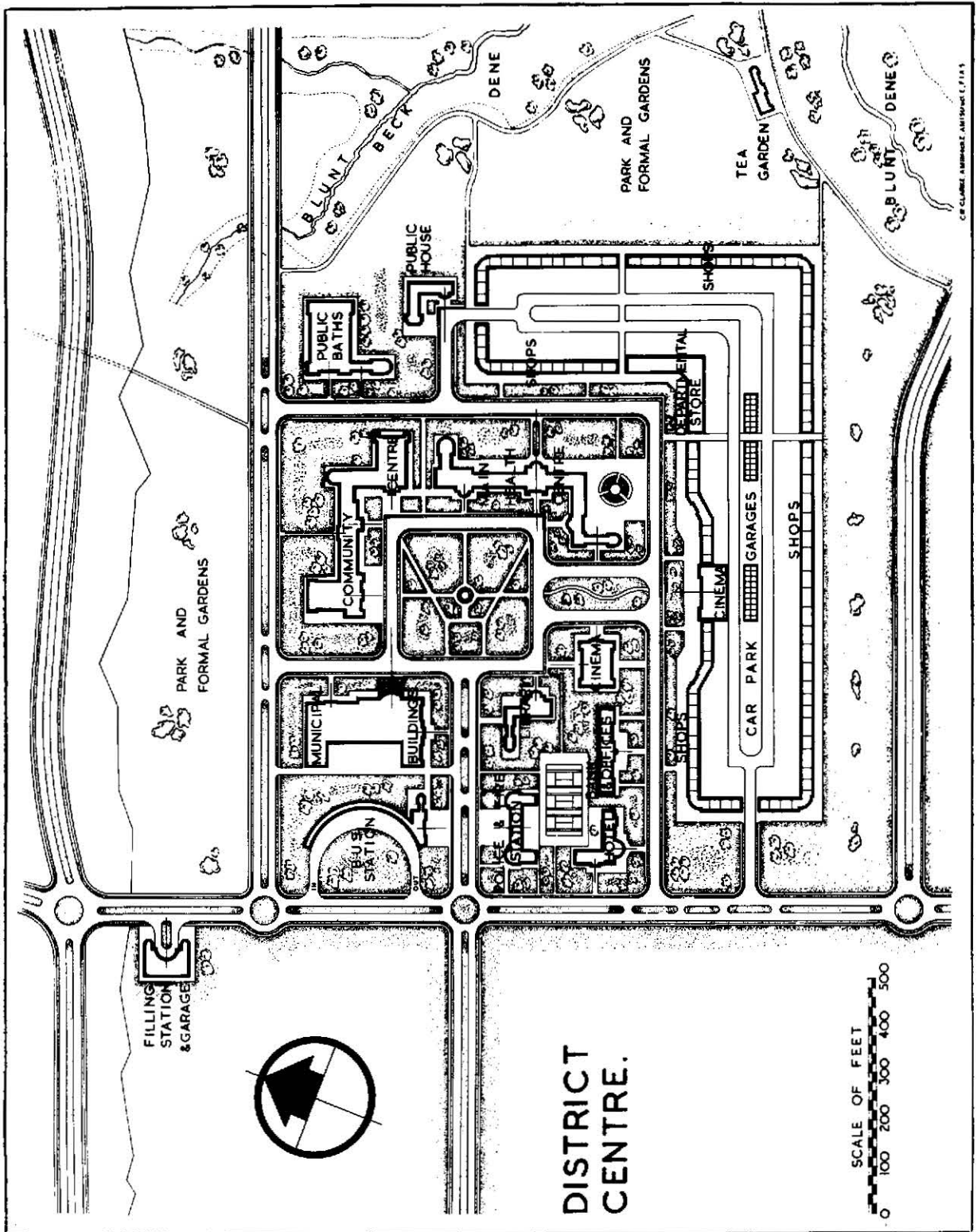
The latter part of "Farewell Squalor" presents plans for the new town itself. Clarke had chosen a sparsely populated agricultural site between Shotton Colliery and Horden, bounded on the south by Castle Eden Dene. In accordance with contemporary planning principles, the town was to be divided into three "neighbourhood units". Each unit would be served by a centre containing various facilities and, in addition, service functions for the District as a whole would be provided in the Town ("District") Centre. The care with which the plans had been worked out and Clarke's great attention to detail may be gauged from the examples reproduced in Figs. 2.3 to 2.5. Clarke had considered the present and future housing needs of the District and consequently anticipated that the town should have a population of about 30,000. Finally, in an Author's Note to "Farewell Squalor", Clarke suggested that the town be named after Peter Lee, thus perpetuating the memory of a local man who had done much to secure better conditions for the people of the area. Clarke's concluding paragraph exemplifies the spirit in which the project was originated and justified:

"Let us, therefore, close our eyes on the nineteenth century degradation and squalor, and let us only look with unseeing eyes on the sordid excrescence of the first decade of this century, let us blind ourselves to the septic and ugly building wens and ribbons perpetrated and planted on us between the wars, but let us open our eyes and look brightly forward and onward to the new town, the new living Peterlee."



PLAN No. 4. Neighbourhood Centre No. 1.

Fig. 2.4 Neighbourhood Plan
(from "Farewell Squalor").



3.3 Designation

Having already established firm contact with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning through its regional office (at Newcastle), Clarke and other R.D.C. officers pursued further consultations with the Ministry after the Council's acceptance of his Outline Plan. At this stage the Council still contemplated undertaking the scheme themselves - but this, of course, was dependent upon the Ministry's approval. The Ministry, however, became increasingly interested in carrying out the scheme under the New Towns Act. No doubt the Ministry was eager to apply the Act in a situation where a New Town was desired rather than resisted - bearing in mind the recent unpleasant experience of local opposition at Stevenage and elsewhere (Orlans, 1952). Moreover, within the context of a national fuel crisis (the effects of which were severely felt during the winter of 1946-7), the Ministry and the Government were anxious to show that the miners were to be helped and the manpower problem would be positively tackled - even if the effects would not be seen for several years. The Ministry thus persuaded Easington R.D.C. of the advantages of utilizing the New Towns Act. It seems evident that the Council was unaware of the full implications of this; in particular the autonomous nature of a Development Corporation was not appreciated. The Council did not expect to lose control of the scheme; one well-placed informant⁽¹⁾ has suggested that the Council anticipated that the Minister would appoint several Councillors to serve on the Corporation Board and that Clarke himself expected to become the New Town's architect-planner. In any case, the Council unanimously decided, in March 1947, to have the New Town built by a Government-supported Development

(1) Interview with a senior local government officer, 21.1.76. This informant went so far as to suggest that councillors thought that the setting up of a Corporation would provide well-paid "jobs for the boys".

Corporation under the provisions of the New Towns Act. Clarke's "Farewell Squalor" was published at the same time - but made no reference to the use of the New Towns Act - in order to present the idea to a wider audience.

Following further consultations with the Ministry, Lewis Silkin, the Minister, came to Easington in August 1947 to formally discuss the proposal with the Local Authorities concerned. His submission largely repeated the views advanced in "Farewell Squalor". He agreed that there were compelling arguments in favour of the concentration of future development on a new site since the existing villages "were not such as to justify their extension"; they were unplanned, decrepit and suffered the "smell, smoke and noise of the pit all the time".⁽¹⁾ Silkin agreed with Clarke's choice of site and his suggestion that the ultimate population of the New Town should be set at 30,000 although, feeling that this might prove insufficient to support a full range of services, pointed out that the target might be increased in the future. He also approved the proposal that the town be named "Peterlee".

The Minister's statements on industrial development diverged from Clarke's views (and those of the Council) and were somewhat contradictory. Silkin maintained that a New Town would help to attract new industry to the area which would be of particular benefit in providing work for women - traditionally, there had been few employment opportunities for women and, as the Minister pointed out, the area's female economic activity rate was only one-sixth of the national average. But on the question of new opportunities for men

(1) Verbatim report of the Minister's meeting with Local Authorities at Easington, 27.8.47, pp.2-3; in Easington R.D.C. minutes, 1947 (RD/Ea.25).

he was less forthcoming and promised little. Providing men with alternatives to mining was not, of course, a contemporary concern of the Government; the "national interest" lay in stabilising and increasing the mining labour force. On the other hand, whilst the intention was to develop a "New Town for Miners", the broader ideology of the programme as a whole could not be ignored. Thus, reference was made to social balance, but without an explicit logical link to the provision of alternative employment opportunities:

"... he /Silkin/ thought that it was definitely anti-social that they should have people of one income group and one type of occupation all segregated together, merely able to discuss the events of the pit and life around the pit, and nothing else. It was /he said/ anti-social and undesirable and created a particular type of psychology which he thought we wanted to get away from. It was essential that miners should have the opportunity of mixing with people of other occupations and income levels." (1)

Following this important and apparently very congenial meeting at Easington, the Minister appointed an ad hoc Advisory Committee, pending the establishment of a Development Corporation, to begin to consider how Peterlee was to be developed. In November 1947 the statutory Draft Designation Order was published, objections were received and a Public Inquiry held in the following January. Three Parish Councils - Haswell, Thornley and Hutton Henry (parishes in the west of the R.D. and thus some distance from the proposed Peterlee site) rejected the views of their representatives on the R.D.C. and raised objections to Peterlee's designation. They argued that the New Town would divert resources from the reconstruction and re-development of the older villages and deprive them of much-needed new housing. But their objections were subsequently dismissed; the Minister said that "everything possible would be done to improve conditions in the coalfield generally and not only in the New Town area". In addition, he was satisfied that "the beneficial effect

(1) Ibid., p.3

of the New Town would be felt throughout the district".⁽¹⁾ The objections of landowners and farmers were also overruled, as were those raised by West Hartlepool Borough Council, which feared that its own attempts at industrial regeneration would be prejudiced by the growth of a rival centre at Peterlee.

The final Designation Order for Peterlee was made and Peterlee Development Corporation constituted on March 10th 1948. The Order lists the general aims of the New Town:

- 1) "To provide accommodation for some thirty thousand people, drawn, in the main, from the Easington Rural District."
- 2) "To provide the recreational and shopping centre which is needed to give the district as a whole a greater degree of cohesion and self-sufficiency."
- 3) "To provide the industrial employment to absorb the female labour available in the district and any male labour not employed in coal-mining."

Peterlee was thus conceived as a means of meeting local housing needs and providing an urban focus for the area. Its industrial development role was less clearly established in relation to male employment, as shown by the weak and negative reference to "any male labour not employed in coal mining". Although it was not stated explicitly that the concept was of a "New Town for Miners" it was generally understood that this was to be Peterlee's function.

Thus Peterlee, Britain's seventh New Town, was inaugurated. But almost three years were to elapse - in which some of the weaknesses of the proposal became apparent - before Peterlee's first tenants arrived.

(1) Objections raised at the Public Inquiry and the Minister's replies are given in the First Annual Report of Peterlee Development Corporation (1949), from which these quotes are taken.

4. Disagreements, difficulties and delays, 1948-50.

Circumstances appeared, initially, to favour an early start to development at Peterlee. The New Town had not been conceived in an atmosphere of local hostility as had been the case elsewhere and the scheme had the active support of the Local Authority. A substantial part of the survey work had already been undertaken by Clarke and the Ministry and relatively straightforward objectives had been agreed upon. The purchase of the site seemed to pose no problems since much of the land was owned by two landlords: the National Coal Board (NCB) and the Castle Eden Estate, which was then being dispersed following the death of the last surviving member of the Burdon family.

These advantages were, however, completely offset by one major disadvantage: the Peterlee site was underlain by coal measures and much of this coal still awaited extraction. This problem had been wholly ignored by Clarke in "Farewell Squalor" but now required immediate and careful consideration if the danger of subsidence was to be averted. Soon after designation the Corporation became involved in a protracted argument with the N.C.B. on this issue and the failure of the two parties to reach agreement prevented the commencement of the construction programme. This dispute dominated the first two years of the Corporation's existence and the resulting lack of progress at Peterlee was the main reason why support for the New Town scheme began to wane. In addition, on account of its structure and its methods, the Corporation became increasingly unpopular - especially with Easington R.D.C.

The Corporation Board comprised all those who had previously served on the Advisory Committee. Contrary to the expectations of

Easington R.D.C. - and much to the Council's chagrin - the Minister chose to appoint only one of the Council's nominees. Of the eight Board Members, only two were strictly local people - an Easington R.D. Councillor and the wife of the Council's clerk. The all-important post of Corporation Chairman had been awarded to a stranger (1) to the area, Dr. Monica Felton, a former member of the Reith Committee. These, and subsequent appointments, led the Council to feel aggrieved that the scheme which they had prepared and promoted - and which, in their view, had entirely local objectives - had been taken out of their control and placed in the hands of "outsiders". Moreover, the Corporation established its headquarters at Shotton Hall, a country house on the western edge of the designated area; the remote location of the Hall and its comparative grandeur contributed to the impression that the Corporation was secretive, aloof and out of touch with local people. The Council's experience of the Corporation in the months following designation reinforced this impression and on several occasions the Council criticised the Corporation for its failure to provide information on its activities. Rumour and controversy, particularly involving Dr. Felton, led to the further deterioration of the Corporation's position in the area.

Curiously, the Corporation seems to have chosen to disregard Clarke's efforts and the considerable research evidence presented in "Farewell Squalor". Perhaps the main reason for this was that Clarke himself was not appointed to the Corporation; instead, an internationally renowned architect, Berthold Lubetkin, was chosen as "architect-planner" for Peterlee (see Plate 12). Lubetkin had very definite views on how Peterlee should be built which differed

(1) The structure of Peterlee Development Corporation and the changing composition of its Board Membership are discussed fully in chapter VI below.

Story of a Great Adventure



Already work has started on what will be the most modern town in the world—Peterlee, in Co. Durham. Its architect-planner is Berthold Lubetkin; it will cost £14,000,000 and will house at least 30,000 people. Although it is one of the Government's "new

towns," it is more important than any in the London area. It will be chiefly a miners' town, but it will also be a commercial and cultural centre for an area holding 100,000 people. It possesses a remarkable ravine which will then become a natural park

By **JOHN BREWSTER** *News Chronicle Architectural Correspondent*

FROM butterflies to bricks and mortar sounds a far cry, but behind the squalid little mining town of Horden, Co. Durham, lies an almost unknown wasteland, edged by a ravine of enchanting beauty, where this is to become fact nearly overnight. Today this ravine is a tangled mass of

BERTHOLD LUBETKIN.—His genius in solving present-day problems by a combination of modern building techniques with traditional materials has succeeded in producing a contemporary architecture of world repute

dense woods, caverns and great out-croppings of limestone rising steeply to the flattish plateau of Peterlee two hundred and fifty feet above.

Twelve miles westward lies Durham, while out over

Horden is the North Sea. For almost eight hundred years all this has remained guarded from the public as a sanctuary for flora and fauna—including a species of butterfly found only here, in all Britain. Tomorrow it will form a natural park—already Kew Garden experts are at work—skirting the most modern town in the world.

For Peterlee is to be the scene of Britain's most exciting post-war story. A story that will prove—even in the midst of our austerity—many of our so-far-unrealised ideals and set an international standard in town planning that will redeem us in the eyes of the world.

Fine teamwork

Peterlee is not just another stunt or set of drawings and models for expanding an existing village to a new town. The differences are many—actual buildings start this year, in official jargon it holds first priority. It is a brand new town starting from an open space and starting straight away.

On my way to interview the architect for Peterlee I reflected on the happy augury of the New Town Corporation's foresight in selecting Lubetkin as chief archi-

tect. Comparatively young, almost visionary but of proven worth practically, even in private practice he had submerged his own name in insuring a team of young designers to produce some of the finest contemporary architecture in the world.

They have to their credit such a diversity as the Penguin Pool, the famous Highpoint Highgate Flats and Pinsbury Health Centre. Peterlee promised to be exciting.

Opportunities

When I met Lubetkin he dealt immediately with the opportunities ahead for the town's creators. Here was a lifetime of constructive work, without the usual frustrations.

The corporation, composed of people of all shades of opinion who have already proved their worth in local affairs, is under the chairmanship of Dr. Monica Felton, first woman to be chairman of a New Town Corporation.

The enthusiasm with which this team is getting down to its new job is in no small measure due to per, for she has already served on several local authorities and gave up the vice-chairmanship of Stevenage to undertake this bigger task.

The Government had pledged it would not stand in the way of any point logically proven. There



Extraction of the coal promises an advance of world-wide interest

would be difficulties, but only those of constructive planning and building, not combined with the obstructive animosity of sections of the townspeople.

Work started from a clean site. Just as this generation has succeeded at Hiroshima in destroying a town, so Lubetkin hopes to prove the same generation can create one. Here is the greatest building adventure since the construction of Bath.

The need was there. Not only would it provide greater amenities and prevent the unsightly straggling of some 15 unhealthy mining villages, but also new light industries would provide work for women in an area where only some 7 per cent. are gainfully employed as compared with 36 per cent. for the country as a whole.

Real character

Lubetkin enthused over the particular character of mining communities. Their strength and solidarity through common interests eliminated the sentimental "Englishman's home is his Castle" atmosphere, and produced a real, close-knit communal cohesion that proper planning should express.

And the shape of things to come?

In Britain since 1935 almost the only new urban building has been housing. Peterlee will be a new town complete with every form of building that our civilisation requires. The initial population will certainly be not less than 30,000.

It will be a four-dimensional town, for not only its surface pattern and heights be considered but also the underground mine workings and

The extraction of this coal is another story but promises an advance of world-wide interest. For the present we can only say there will be no sulphurous spoil heaps.

Above ground, I sense, some of the activities the town will house are going to affect the character of all North-East England. Again, for the present we must be content to know that its first aim is to produce a balanced community.

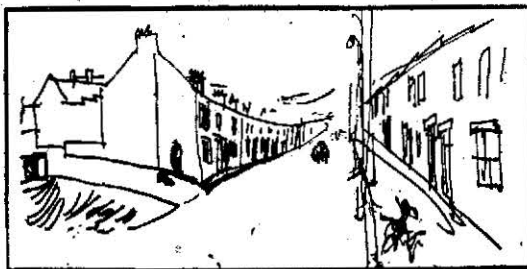
A rich life

Here will be all that goes to a healthy urban life—a varied range of work and workers combined with plentiful sources of learning, health, recreation and traffic amenities. Regional surveys have already begun in order to relate needs, industry, social life, agriculture and diet.

As a nucleus for this new community, what amounts to a covered wagon campus is being formed on the spot to house the planners, engineers, architects, artists and building workers who will create this town. It is a life's work, so here is the first worth-while strata for the Peterlee community.

Within the campus is a temporary assembly hall. In it will be exhibitions of all that is being conceived and done—drawings, furniture, lectures, discussions. On notice boards in nearby towns and villages the people for whom Peterlee will form a background and environment will be told of progress and asked for advice and guidance.

Surely this is a new form of pioneering, a drama in planning which cannot fail to enhance national prestige. It has begun, both in fact and in Britain.



What Peterlee will prevent... "the unsightly straggling of mining villages". Drawings by Topolski

Plate 12.
Press report on Lubetkin.
(News Chronicle, 10.5.48.)

Peterlee Chairman Faces the Critics THREE-HOUR DEBATE

A MEETING at Thornley last night addressed by Dr Monica Felton, chairman of Peterlee Development Corporation, lasted nearly three hours.

There were many critics of the scheme, some being from the neighbouring village of Wheatley Hill.

One of the chief critics was Mr E. F. Peart, who presided. He stressed that the meeting was arranged by the Labour Party.

His first criticism was that Easington Rural District Council had allied itself with the scheme, when at least 90 per cent of the people were against it. In the 1946 elections, not one candidate, irrespective of Party, had mentioned Peterlee, which was a departure from the existing policy at Easington of every village receiving its fair allocation of houses.

The forcing of the scheme on the people was a negation of democracy. "It savours and smells of totalitarianism, of which we hear so much about other parts of the world," disclaimed Mr Peart.

He then went on to criticize the appointment of a "horde" of officials at big salaries.

"GLARING EXAMPLE"

A glaring example of wasteful expenditure by the corporation was the reconditioning of Shotton Hall. As many as 60 or 70 employees were engaged on the work, often on overtime, and the cost would be nearer £10,000 than £5,000. Men and labour were being used there when council houses were crying out for repairs, the position being so grave that in Thornley and Wheatley Hill alone there were 1,500 cases of needed repairs.

The corporation had gate-crashed the queue instead of taking its proper place in it.

Dr Felton said she had not

come to justify existence of the Peterlee scheme. The request had been put forward by Easington Rural District Council, though some parishes dissented.

"WOULD FAIL"

She agreed that Peterlee would fail unless it could be put financially on its feet. That depended on the extent to which they could attract business people and industrialists.

On appointments, Dr Felton said the corporation had made it a principle that it would do nothing which it would not be prepared to answer for openly and frankly. Nobody had gone in and would go in "by the back door" to the staff at Peterlee.

Dr Felton then answered other critics and questioners. She said the question of building churches, and the provision of money for such a purpose, was receiving careful consideration. The form of government, and whether eventually Peterlee would be included with other places in local government, could not be settled yet. It would take other four months to get out the master plan.

Building would be begun in 1949, and by 1950 building would be going on on a big scale.

The Things They Said

At Thornley last night:

Dr. Monica Felton, Peterlee chairman, said she had put on her "red coat" to go to the rebel village.

Mr E. F. Peart said Peterlee should be called "Hordenville." Dr Felton said she was a life-long member of the Labour Party.

Coun. Mrs Roper said she hoped that people would not have to wait for houses until Peterlee had "petered out." On doubts as to whether Thornley women would go to Peterlee to do their shopping, Dr Felton said it would be better to wait until Peterlee shops were built.

The Rev. E. C. Hudson said he hoped Peterlee would not eventually be like Horden and Easington—"simply abominable."

Dr Felton is Kept Busy

ONE of the busiest public personalities in South-East Durham is undoubtedly Dr Monica Felton, chairman of the Peterlee Development Corporation. A keen exponent of modern town planning, Dr Felton believes in getting the opinions of local people and to this end she never loses an opportunity of attending local gatherings to give the residents of the villages a chance to put forward their views. It is her belief that as the new town will be peopled by residents of the surrounding villages they ought to have some say in the planning of Peterlee.

On Thursday, July 22, she is to present the prizes at Horden Modern Boys' School, and at night will visit Seaham to address the members of Seaham and Dawdon Towns-women's Guild.

The following day Dr Felton travels to Newcastle where she will address Newcastle Rotary Club, and on July 29 she will be guest-speaker at Sunderland Rotary Club.

Citizens To Create Own Town PETERLEE PLAN

PEOPLE coming to live in the new town of Peterlee should not have to think of it as something which had been given to them by a more or less remote Government, or a more or less remote Minister of Town and Country Planning, or perhaps a slightly less remote Corporation or Rural Council. It had to be thought of as something which the people of the

area were going to take an active part in creating for themselves.

Dr Monica Felton, chairman of the Peterlee Development Corporation, expressed this view at a school held at Easington Colliery on Saturday by Durham Colleges Extra-Mural Board in conjunction with the corporation.

Dr Felton added that there would be difficulties, and physical planning was not the slightest use unless it was preceded by the right kind of economic planning.

If they were going to make a success of planning the first steps were to see—and she meant the corporation—that they got really well criticized, but it must be criticism based on knowledge, and not mere prejudice. With criticism of the right kind they got a better job done, and that was the real point.

WHEN COAL ENDS

Of industries for the town she said she could not say specifically what these would be.

Labour resources would have to be looked into, bearing in mind that ultimately that coal would be worked out. That was a long way ahead, but Peterlee was a town that was being built for all time. When these details were obtained they would then go out and see what kind of firms were likely to come.

Coun. G. Barnes, chairman of Easington Rural Council, presided.

Peterlee: miners dislike this interference

To the Editor of the Northern Echo

Sir,—The Public Inquiry at Easington about Peterlee was a farce; I think it was a foregone conclusion that the town would be proceeded with and the objectors had no chance at all against the Ministry, although their argument was good. The Ministry's case for going ahead with Peterlee is poor, and the answers to the objectors inadequate and not true to the facts.

The miners have far more to lose than they have to gain, if one looks at it from the many different angles. The building of a new town we can do without, costing £14,000,000 and taking up so much agricultural land when the country is in so much need of land, is bound to have a bad psychological effect on the miners as well as others who will be asking themselves "Is the country really in a bad state when they can do all this?"

Why cannot the miners be left alone to live their own way of life, instead of interfering people coming along telling them what they should do and what they shouldn't? There will be trouble ahead if this interference in the miners' affairs goes on.—Yours etc.

COASTAL COLLIERY,
Easington, Co. Durham, 13 March.

Plate 13.

Early comments on Peterlee.

(Sunderland Echo, 2.6.48., 14.7.48., 14.6.48. and Northern Echo, 16.3.48.)

markedly from those of the less-adventurous Clarke. Under Lubetkin's direction, a social survey of the Rural District was carried out in mid-1948 in which ten per-cent of households were interviewed (by a team of local housewives engaged by a social survey consultancy).⁽¹⁾ The extent of deprivation, particularly in housing, previously identified somewhat emotively in "Farewell Squalor", was confirmed. 35% of households were found to be relatively overcrowded (i.e. living at a density above one person per room) and one-fifth of households had an additional family "living in" with them. Only one-quarter of households had an indoor lavatory and 46% had no fixed bath. The dominance of coal-mining was shown by the fact that 71% of men in work were employed in that industry. This survey, together with several other local studies, added detail and some sophistication to the work done by Clarke but reached much the same conclusions and, to that extent, represented an unnecessary duplication of effort.

Meanwhile, Dr. Felton spoke of Peterlee at numerous public meetings in the area and maintained that the Corporation welcomed ideas from local people. She pointed out that Peterlee presented a great opportunity for "democratic planning" - a principle to which she declared herself committed - because Peterlee was the only New Town where it was known where the new residents would be coming from and so could be consulted beforehand. Dr. Felton was not received with great encouragement in some of the villages, however, and even in the first few months there were significant undercurrents of opposition (see Plate 13). Doubts must also be raised as to the strength of commitment to participation, especially with regard to Lubetkin and other Corporation officers.

(1) The survey was conducted by Research Services Ltd. and reported in their publication Social Survey in Easington Rural District (1948). The main findings were published in New Town for Old, by Helen Rankin (1949).

Lubetkin himself had decided, at an early stage, how Peterlee could best be developed and it was his dogmatic adherence to his plan - backed by the Corporation Board - which caused the problem of coal extraction to develop into a major and intractable difficulty. According to Steele's (1962) detailed account, Clarke, the Ministry and the NCB had discussed the problem before designation and agreed on a low density construction programme phased with mining operations. The formula thus informally agreed upon would minimise the risk of subsidence, cause little disruption to the NCB's activities and, above all, minimise the possible liability of the NCB to claims for subsidence damage. However, after designation the newly-appointed Lubetkin ignored this agreement and, indeed, chose to disregard the under-mining of the site as a constraint. He considered that the saucer-shape of the site should be exploited by a dense, relatively high-rise town centre, envisaging that, for reasons of architecture alone, 20%-30% of the population would be housed in high rise town centre flats with residential densities diminishing outwards from the centre to the periphery. This in itself would necessitate the sterilisation of millions of tons of coal beneath the town centre to provide these high buildings with adequate foundations; in addition, Lubetkin was opposed to any phasing plan for the rest of the town. He would not submit to interference with his plan and argued that piecemeal development and any delay in building up the town centre would seriously prejudice Peterlee's chances of success.

The NCB, for its part, was equally anxious to counter any move which might threaten production and the proposed re-organisation and expansion of Shotton and Horden collieries; its overriding concern was to increase output. Thus the two branches of the State, the Corporation and the NCB, found themselves in conflict despite the overall similarity in their objectives. Yet agreement had to be reached, not only because of the subsidence problem but also

because, in conveying land to the Corporation, the NCB had included a restriction that their approval must be sought for surface developments. The whole issue was further confused by a general lack of technical knowledge on subsidence so that if agreement was to be reached it was not clear beforehand on what basis it might be constituted.

The NCB did, in fact, offer the Corporation several small and scattered sites for which it had no objections to immediate development and one of these, Thorntree Gill, was accepted. In March 1949, the Corporation sought approval for a housing scheme on this site but the Ministry refused to sanction this, on the grounds that such a scheme must await clarification of the mining situation in relation to the preparation of a Master Plan.

An attempt was then made to break the deadlock by the referral, in July 1949, of the problem to the Lord President's Committee of the Cabinet. The Committee decided in favour of the Corporation, instructing the NCB to make available "for immediate development", the town centre and adjacent residential sites. But this decision was rescinded at a second meeting of the Committee some months later. With the support of the miners' lodges of Shotton and Horden, who were led to believe (no doubt, correctly) that Peterlee would pose a threat to their livelihood, the NCB successfully argued against any proposal involving the large-scale sterilisation of coal reserves. The Committee maintained that a mutually satisfactory agreement, based on co-operation between the Corporation and the NCB would have to be negotiated, and established a working party for this purpose.⁽¹⁾

(1) This brief account of these events is based on the complex and detailed account presented by Steele, 1962, ch.3.

By this time Lubetkin had already lost some of his supporters on the Corporation Board, including Dr. Monica Felton who, after 18 unhappy months at Peterlee, had been re-appointed as Chairman of the Corporation at Stevenage. It was clear that the Corporation, under Lord Beveridge, Felton's successor, would accede to the requirements of the NCB - in fact the Corporation had little choice. Thus, Lubetkin resigned early in 1950 and his team was dismissed and disbanded, having produced a number of research documents⁽¹⁾ and a short Draft Outline Plan, which was now shelved.

The Grenfell Baines Group, a planning consultancy which had recently produced the Master Plan for Aycliffe (of which Corporation Lord Beveridge was also Chairman), was now engaged to produce a Master Plan for Peterlee, based on negotiated phasing arrangements with the NCB. Detailed negotiations, through the working party and with the help of technical advisors, secured a suitable agreement between the Corporation and the NCB. Coal was to be sterilised only underneath a relatively small town centre site; elsewhere surface development would be phased with mining operations. Thus, the main concern of the Master Plan, completed in 1952, was to divide the whole Peterlee site into a patchwork of small areas, determining the date at which each would be available - and safe - for development. It is proof of the success of this Plan and also the effectiveness of the special structural features incorporated in the construction of many buildings, that little subsidence damage has occurred. The physical development of Peterlee represents a

(1) The two major documents produced, to which we again refer in later chapters, were Social and Economic Research and Analysis of Planning Problems, both of which were confidential reports presented to the Corporation in 1950.

considerable technical achievement⁽¹⁾ - although it may be said that the site was ill-chosen and that the problem should certainly have been appreciated and revealed before designation. The difficulty had previously been clearly anticipated by the Reith Committee which had proffered the sensible advice that a New Town "should not be sited ... on land liable to subsidence through mineral workings".⁽²⁾

Pending the completion of the Master Plan, which was now assured, the Ministry gave approval for the Corporation's first small-scale housing estate at Thorntree Gill and construction began in 1950. This represented the first sign of real progress towards building the town. But by this time, after two years of dispute, inaction and growing frustration amongst those wanting to be housed, there was little enthusiasm for Peterlee; the impetus had been lost and could not be regained.

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- (1) The technical problems involved in co-ordinating surface and underground development at Peterlee are reported in Dobson et.al., 1959.
- (2) Reith Committee, Final Report, 1946, para. 27(7).

5. Concluding Comment

The designation of Peterlee represents the conjunction of local attempts to seek improvements in living conditions with the aims and policies of Central Government. The social and economic history of the area defined the preconditions for the emergence of the proposal. At a national level the newly-elected Labour Government sought to revive the coal industry by Nationalization and also by instigating improvements intended to increase and stabilise manpower. In the context of the latter policy, the Peterlee scheme was acceptable and regarded as justifiable by the Government. In addition, it had been well presented and formulated by Clarke and had won the full support of the Local Authority; both of these factors helped ensure its success.

After designation, however, difficulties arose when the Corporation attempted to pursue plans which threatened coal production and thereby threatened to remove the justification for Peterlee. Construction was delayed and opposition to the Corporation grew on all sides. Peterlee was subsequently developed in an atmosphere of hostility and not without difficulties arising from the coal problem. This process of development is reviewed in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER III

PETERLEE - HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

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PETERLEE - HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

1. Introduction

The provision of housing has been a major concern of the Corporation; this is emphasised by the Corporation's relatively low level of involvement in industrial and commercial development at Peterlee in comparison with the situation in most other New Towns. Housing has accounted for about half of the Corporation's fixed capital expenditure and provides nearly three-quarters of the Corporation's operating income. The build-up of Peterlee's housing stock, coupled with restrictions on re-building the villages, has also restructured the pattern of housing opportunities in the sub-region, resulting in substantial movements of population.

The discussion begins by tracing the contexts of Peterlee's population growth. Section 2.1 describes the physical development of housing at Peterlee and Section 2.2 outlines the sub-regional background, revealing the important link between Peterlee's growth and the decline of the surrounding villages.

Section 3 closely analyses the attendant movements of population and also looks at the principal features of the housing allocation system.

In section 4, "the geography of housing", we point to some of Peterlee's socio-spatial characteristics (4.1) and then again consider housing from a sub-regional perspective (4.2).

Section 5 then questions the quality of Peterlee's housing stock, demonstrating that the contrast between "modern" housing in Peterlee and "obsolescent" housing in the villages may be less clear and more complicated when qualitative considerations are brought to bear.

Some salient points emerging from this necessarily detailed chapter are summarised in section 6.



Plate 14.
Thorntree Gill, May 1951.
View from N.E. with Horden
in the foreground.

2. Contexts

2.1 An outline of housing development at Peterlee

This section provides a generalised account of the physical build-up of Peterlee's housing stock as a prelude to a detailed treatment of migration and population growth.

The Corporation's first housing scheme, at Thorntree Gill, an estate of about 100 dwellings (82 houses and 24 maisonettes) was completed in 1951. The first tenants moved in during February 1951 and the estate was formally opened by Mr. Shinwell, M.P. for the Easington constituency, in March. But this was an isolated scheme, both in physical terms and in relation to the overall planning concept of Peterlee. In fact, the site - on the south-western edge of the New Town area, overlooking Castle Eden Dene and adjacent to Horden - had originally been selected from the NCB's list of acceptable sites because its development would not prejudice the eventual Master Plan (see Plate 14).

While construction was underway at Thorntree Gill, discussions continued between the Corporation and the NCB on the question of further developments. The new spirit of co-operation between the two bodies enabled agreement to be reached allowing the Corporation to proceed with large scale housing schemes in the "North East Quadrant", comprising the Edenhill and Chapel Hill areas. In addition, long term arrangements were considered, culminating in the publication of the Master Plan in September 1952.

The Master Plan translated the mining programme of the NCB and the resulting constraints on the use of land into a detailed phasing programme for Peterlee's development. The basis of the arrangement was that land which had been under-mined would settle and become stable some years after extraction of coal. Coal

measures beneath the town centre would not be exploited, however, thus providing a stable foundation for commercial buildings. There were also some parts of the site which could not be developed at all; the steep-sided ravines formed by the Denes would be left as parkland whilst other areas were excluded for a variety of reasons, mainly in connection with the geological and mining position. The great complexity of the situation may be gauged from Figs. 3.1 and 3.2, key maps taken from the Master Plan.

Good progress was made on the housing schemes at Edenhill and Chapel Hill and by the time the Master Plan was published more than 400 houses had been completed on these estates. With the completion of Edenhill and Chapel Hill I and II estates Peterlee attained a population of more than 5,000 by the end of 1954. Following this - and in accordance with the phasing arrangements set out in the Master Plan - construction began on the adjacent eastern section of Acre Rigg (see Fig. 3.3). Throughout this period of development the group of neighbourhood shops at Yoden Road, Edenhill, served as a temporary centre for the growing New Town and various social activities and services were provided at the Community Centre at Eden Hill House.

All of these estates were unadventurous in style, built to "strictly Ministerial" principles. There was little to distinguish them from contemporary municipal estates: most of the development was of standard, brick-built semi-detached houses with pitched roofs set within curvilinear road layouts. The monotonous and characterless aspect of such housing was re-inforced by the absence of variety, emphasised by featureless open-plan front gardens. Construction costs at this time were reduced to a minimum; ceiling heights, for example, were lowered to save on materials and labour. But all had bathrooms and indoor lavatories - a considerable improvement on the old colliery houses. The only departure from these

Fig.3.1 Availability of Land
(from Peterlee Master Plan).

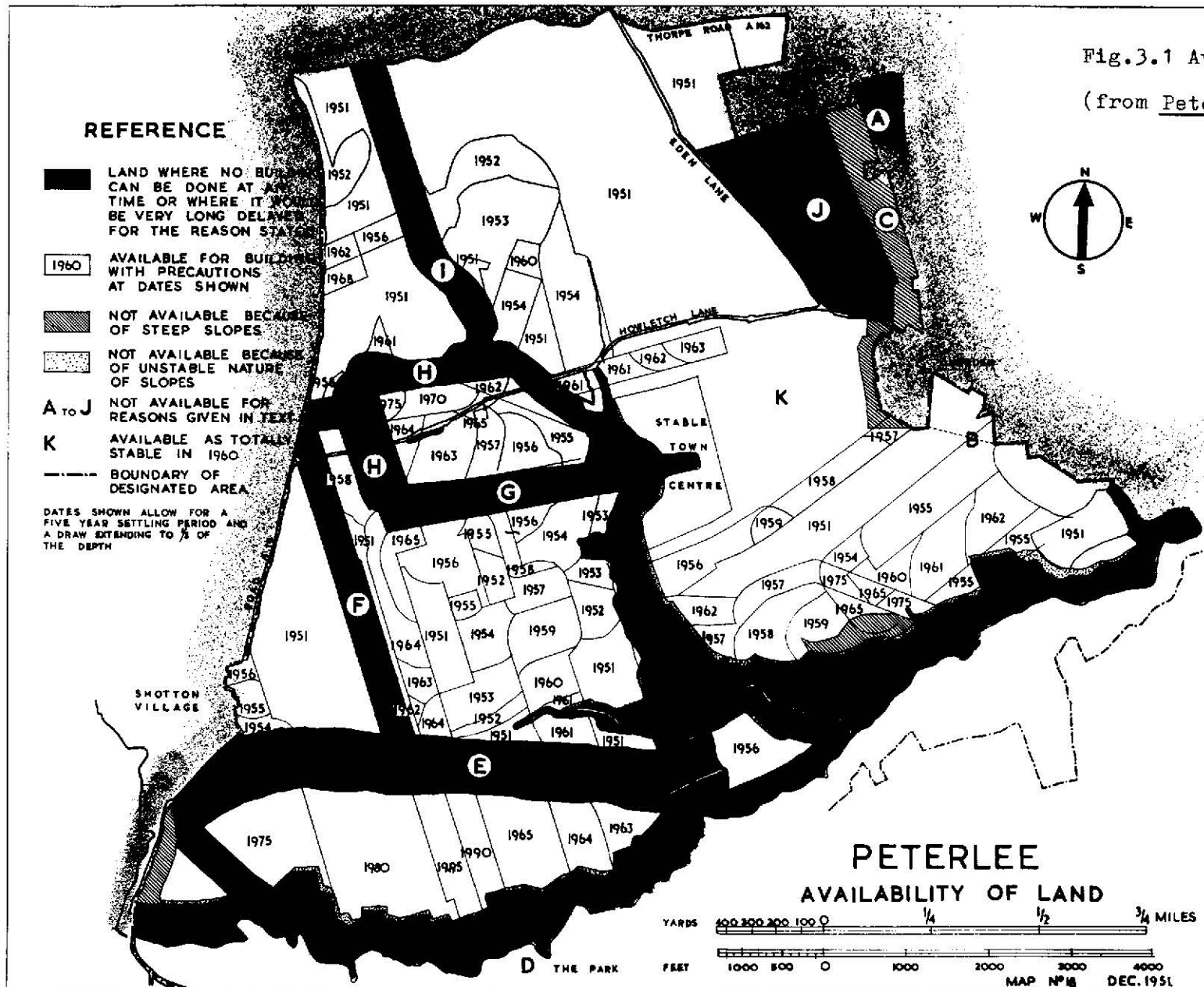
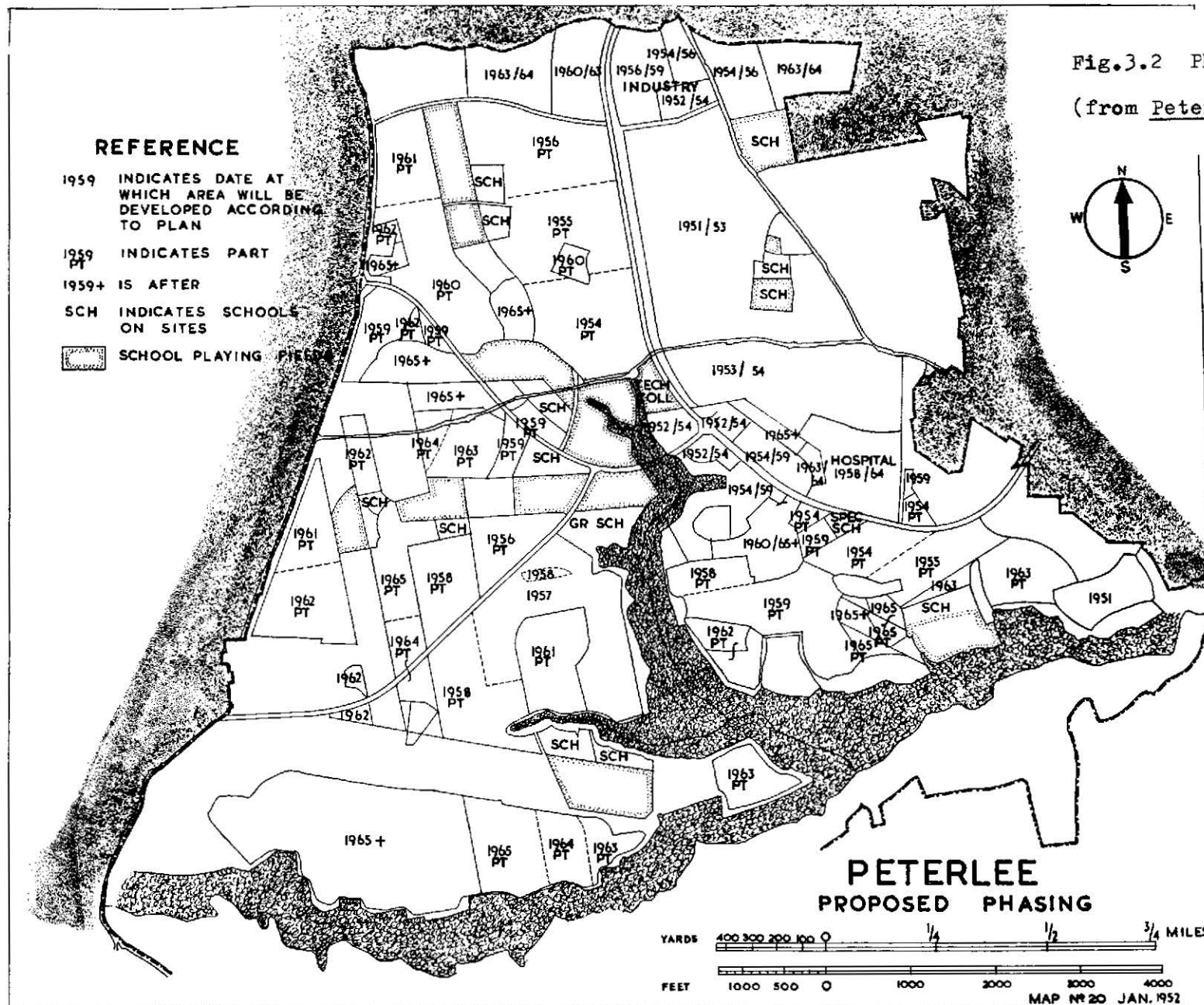


Fig.3.2 Phasing Plan
(from Peterlee Master Plan).



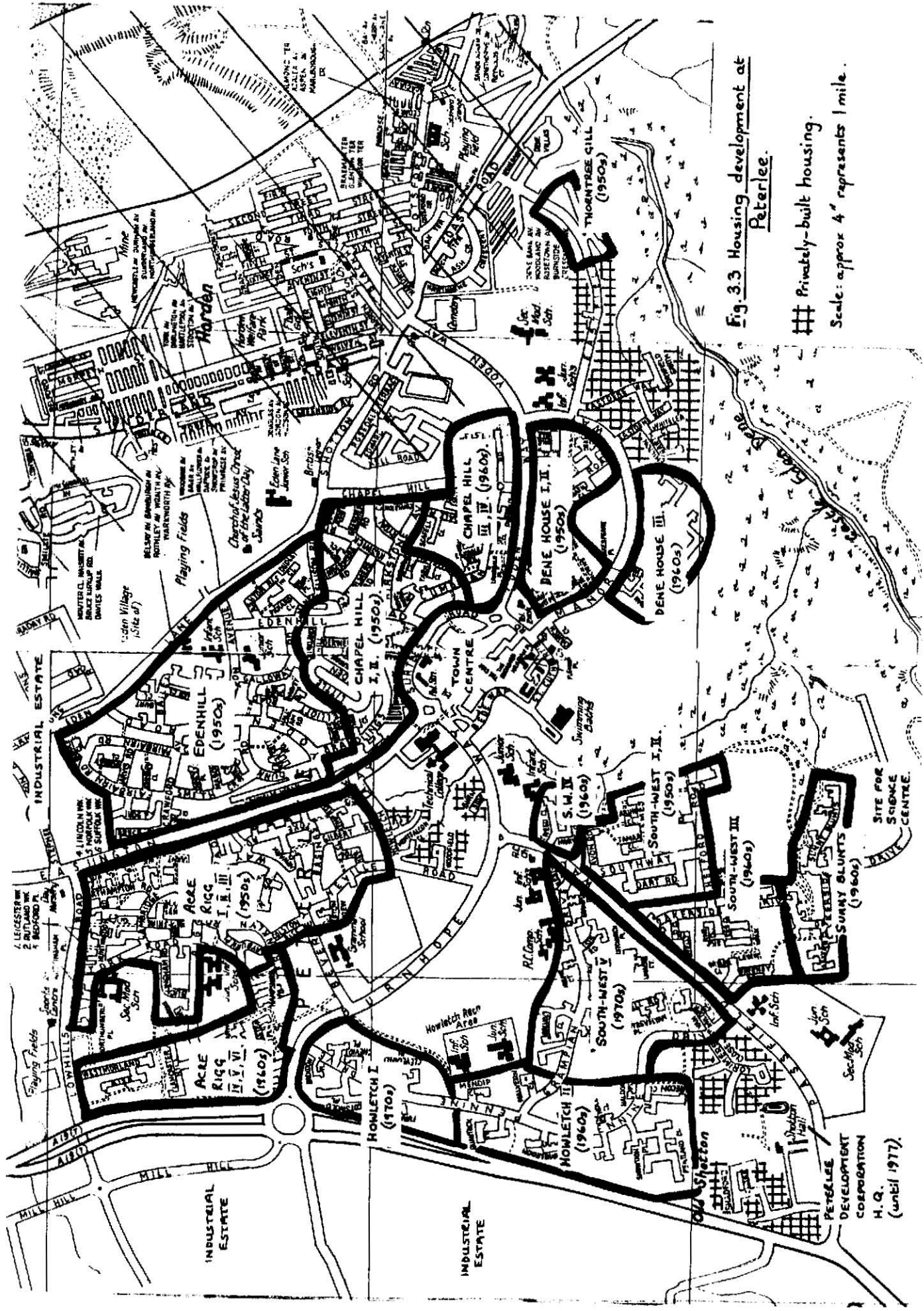
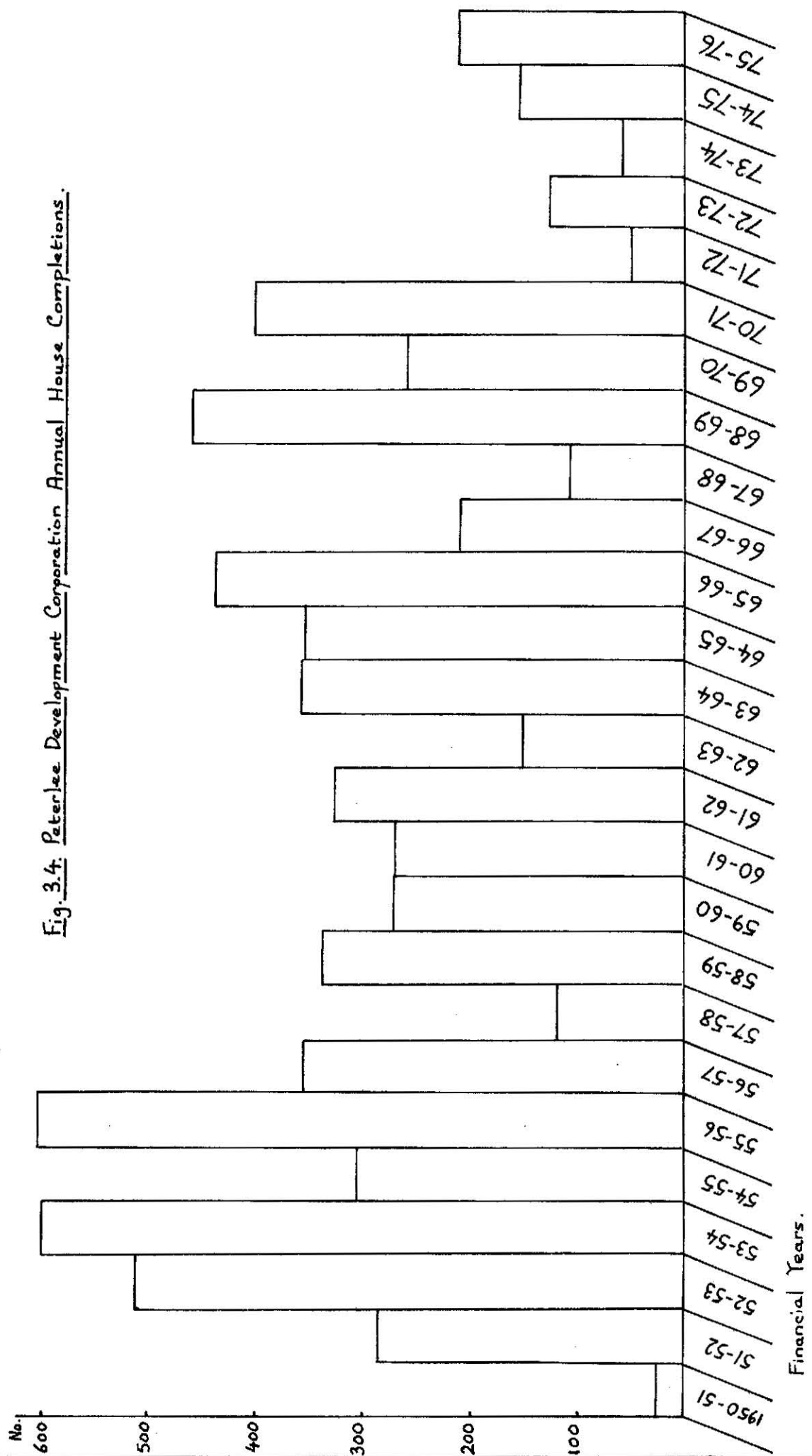


Fig. 3.3 Housing development at Peterlee.

Privately-built housing.
Scale: approx 4" represents 1 mile.

Fig. 3.4: Peterlee Development Corporation Annual House Completions.



Source: Peterlee Development Corporation, Annual Reports.

"standard" houses was provided by the small number of Higher-and Middle-Income Group Houses (as the Corporation called them) built during the 1950s in an attempt to induce industrialists and professional people to live in the town. These were larger houses of better design let by the Corporation at unsubsidised rents⁽¹⁾, but so few were built (less than 30 altogether) that their contribution, both visual and social, was negligible. There was virtually no private housing in Peterlee until the late 1960s nor did the Local Authority, as in many other New Towns, build Council houses in Peterlee; for many years Peterlee consisted almost entirely of standard Corporation rented houses.

During the latter part of the 1950s, development assumed a more piecemeal character in response to the availability of islands of stable land. Housing schemes were started on sites away from the existing nucleus, at Dene House I in 1957 and in the South West Area a few months later.

The development of the South West Area marks the Corporation's first attempt to experiment with housing architecture and planning. In 1955 the Corporation engaged the artist Victor Passmore to collaborate with them in designing the South West Area. A.V. Williams, the Corporation's General Manager, had apparently "grown tired of the rather conventional architecture to which the New Town had been confined" and is said to have told Passmore: "Do what you like, but don't do what we have done before".⁽²⁾

- (1) Corporation houses, like those built by Local Authorities, are normally subsidised by Exchequer grant; "higher standard" houses do not, however, qualify for subsidy.
- (2) Quoted from Brian Morris, Northern Echo, 22.1.63. (Morris presented a three-part feature on Milton Hindle entitled "The Master Builders" in the Northern Echo, 22-24 January 1964). The Milton Hindle Affair is discussed at length in NEAS Working Paper 21 (Robinson, 1975 a) ch.8.



Plate 15 "Standard" housing at Edenhill,
built in the early 1950s.



Plate 16 Passmore housing, S.W. Area.



Plate 17 Crudens' system-built housing,
Howletch II estate.



Plate 18 Privately-built owner-occupied
housing, Eastfield.

Accordingly, Passmore designed an estate of black-and-white flat-roofed houses set within a rectangular layout - an architecture which was indeed highly innovative in the context of contemporary public sector housing. After protracted discussions, the Ministry finally approved the project.

Most of the Corporation's previous housing contracts had been awarded to local firms (Peterlee, unlike Aycliffe, did not have a Corporation Direct Labour Department) but the successful tender for the first phase of the South West Area scheme was submitted by a newcomer to Peterlee, Milton Hindle Ltd., a building contractor from Preston. Hindle's began the South West I project in September 1958 and over the following 18 months succeeded in gaining a handful of Corporation contracts - including housing schemes at Chapel Hill III, Dene House II and South West II - together worth an estimated £1½ million. Mr. Hindle himself became well-known in Peterlee, becoming president of the Community Association and the Conservative Association. But his downfall came in October 1960 when the firm, overburdened with contracts, suffered financial collapse and went into voluntary liquidation. Only 350 houses, out of nearly 800 in contract, had been completed and Peterlee's housing programme subsequently suffered a sharp setback. The affair was widely regarded as a scandal and allegations of mismanagement were subsequently levelled at the Corporation.⁽¹⁾

The Passmore-designed houses met with various reactions. The Chairman of the Easington R.D.C. Housing Committee commented "we are pulling down condemned pit houses which are better than these wooden shambles" to which A.V. Williams replied "they are a subsidised version of a glossy magazine layout ... we make no apology for them".⁽²⁾ Certainly it was later to become clear that, although "brave and imaginative in their general design", these houses were "wretched

(1) Mr. Shinwell, Easington's M.P. and Peterlee Parish Council unsuccessfully called for a Government inquiry into the whole debacle.

(2) Daily Express, 20.11.59.

and shabby in their details and practical execution";⁽¹⁾ serious deficiencies and maintenance problems have demonstrated this (see section 4.2 below). On the other hand, the experiment was well-received by architects and planners and had the effect of providing Peterlee with a distinguishing characteristic: "New Town Miners are at Home with Cubism" read the headline of one feature article in the national press (The Observer, 26.2.61). As far as the Corporation was concerned, Passmore's architecture had, for the first time, put Peterlee "on the map" and Passmore was retained as architectural consultant for future Corporation housing schemes.

By 1960 Peterlee, with more than 3,000 houses completed, had reached a population of about 11,000. The house building programme had slowed down considerably since the mid-1950s and, in fact, after 1956 the level of completions did not again reach the target suggested in the Master Plan of 500 houses per annum (Fig. 3.4). Nevertheless growth continued at a steady pace such that, by the end of the 1960s, Peterlee's population had grown to nearly 22,000 and the town had become the largest settlement in the Rural District, containing more than one-quarter of the area's population. Services and employment did not, however, keep pace with this expansion.

The Hindles contracts were completed (by arrangement with the liquidator) in 1962 and the Passmore designs then repeated on the South West III and Acre Rigg IV estates. A rather different approach was used in the Chapel Hill IV scheme designed by Roy Gazzard, the Corporation's architect. There, it was hoped to inject a sense of urbanity by clustering houses together and using overhanging rooms to form passages; it was "an attempt to get people to live

(1) Morris, Northern Echo, 24.1.64.

near one another in small groups as they have been used to doing in their old homes, but with the addition of pleasant surroundings and improved amenities".⁽¹⁾

In seeking to increase housing output, the Corporation turned to the possibilities of "industrialised" (i.e. pre-fabricated) construction techniques. Such methods were then in vogue as a solution to housing shortages⁽²⁾ and also offered designs which conformed quite closely to the Passmore concept - which the Corporation wished to continue to follow. In 1963 Crudens Ltd., British licensees for the Swedish "Skarne" system, opened a factory in Peterlee making house components and, in the period 1964 to 1967, received contracts to build more than 1200 houses in Peterlee, most of them by the Skarne system. Crudens completed schemes at Acre Rigg V and VI, Dene House III, Sunny Blunts and Howletch II and these red and white flat-roofed houses came to predominate in the western part of the town. The remainder of the Howletch estate (Howletch I) was built to a similar style utilising a slightly different technique but that estate, begun by another contractor in 1969, was delayed by the contractor's liquidation and not completed until 1973.

The system-building experiment was not particularly successful. As with the Passmore houses, there were deficiencies in design and construction which necessitated considerable remedial work and have produced maintenance problems. There had been little prior evidence to suggest that these methods were cheaper, or, necessarily

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- (1) Gazzard, reported in the Sunderland Echo, 14.4.61. The Chapel Hill IV project received a design award from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.
 - (2) The Hailsham Report on the North-East, published in 1963, provides an example of the Government's enthusiasm for the "wider use of industrialised building techniques" (para. 80).

quicker⁽¹⁾ - and experience at Peterlee did not provide such evidence. In fact, the main reason why system-building went out of favour with the Ministry was on grounds of cost - found to be above that of traditional construction. The collapse of the system-built Ronan Point flats also generated substantial public opposition to the use of these methods even, as at Peterlee, for low-rise buildings. By 1968 Peterlee Development Corporation and many local authorities had to discontinue their experiments with these techniques.

With the completion of the Crudens contracts and the remainder of the Howletch estate, the only large area scheduled for housing and still awaiting development was the South West V site. This, together with a small infill scheme at South West IV, was recently (1976) completed. These projects marked a return to the initial Passmore black-and-white designs; their completion also marked the end of Corporation house-building on a large scale.

In recent years the private sector has also built some housing for owner-occupation in Peterlee, mostly within well-defined enclaves with especially attractive surroundings. Yuill's Ltd. has completed private estates at Old Shotton village and East Dene, while individual building plots have been made available at Burnside, Eastfield and Lorimer's Close. But the contribution of the private sector - less than 500 houses - has been small in comparison with the 7,500 houses provided by the Corporation up to 1976.

Within the New Town designated area the vast majority of houses - about 85% - are rented from the Corporation. About half

(1) An evaluation of costs of various system-building methods was undertaken by Cumbernauld Development Corporation and the information passed on to other Corporations, including Peterlee, in a note dated 24.4.63 (in P.D.C. File AH12). Cumbernauld had found that Crudens' Skarne system "seemed to involve increased costs of 12% over traditional methods and did not increase productivity over the first 500 houses".

of the owner-occupied houses were privately built, whilst the rest (approximately 400) were bought from the Corporation by sitting tenants at discounts of up to 20% (prior to the suspension of this purchase option by the Government in 1974). There are only about 100 houses under the ownership of Easington District Council (comprising a scheme at Eden Lane completed in 1976) and private rented accommodation is almost non-existent. The situation will, however, change with the transfer of Corporation housing to the District Council, due to take place in April 1978. Nevertheless it will still be the case that very little housing in Peterlee will be outside State ownership and control.⁽¹⁾

Arising from this heavy emphasis on the public sector is the evident lack of housing choice in Peterlee. In comparison with other New Towns Peterlee has few opportunities for owner-occupation; in 1975 the level of owner-occupation in the English New Towns was not far short of the overall national level of 50% whilst in Peterlee only 13% of houses were owner-occupied. Moreover, the vast majority of Peterlee's housing comprises two and three bedroom family accommodation; there is a limited number of bungalows for the elderly, for which demand is well in excess of supply, and a near-negligible amount of accommodation for single persons. In the absence of a private rented sector to make up for these deficiencies, the Corporation's policy of providing accommodation largely for the small, nuclear family might be considered unenlightened and has undoubtedly affected Peterlee's social development.

With regard to patterns of housing provision and consequent opportunities it is not sufficient, however, to consider only the situation within Peterlee. A broader issue and - in the context of Peterlee's stated objectives - an issue of fundamental concern is

(1) Note that the option allowing tenants to purchase Corporation houses at a discount was re-introduced in March 1977.

the relationship between housing provision in Peterlee and its sub-region. This context is discussed in the next section.

2.2 Peterlee's sub-regional role

As we have shown, the Peterlee scheme derived initially from the concern of Easington R.D.C. to provide new and better housing for those living in the Rural District. The ultimate size of the New Town was based on an estimate of the area's housing needs and Clarke had implied that all those in need of housing in the foreseeable future would be accommodated at Peterlee. Subsequently, the Designation Order stated that Peterlee would "provide accommodation for some thirty-thousand people drawn, in the main, from Easington Rural District". The qualifying phrase "in the main" offered some flexibility (to meet changing circumstances and/or to promote social balance) but it was quite clear that Peterlee's housing function was primarily to be a local one.

The effect of this policy on the existing pit villages had received very little consideration. In "Farewell Squalor" Clarke had merely said that

"The policy of centralised development does not mean the abandonment of existing places, far from it. Vast improvements can be carried out by the clearance of sites of slum clearance houses, the liberal planting of trees and provision of permanent open spaces, the making up of unmade streets, the levelling of redundant spoil heaps and the provision of community halls and other amenities. Further development should, however, be limited" (p.64).

At the Public Inquiry on the designation of Peterlee the three Parish Councils which objected had begun to appreciate that the New Town might have deleterious effects on the villages, but their objections had been overruled by the Minister's vague assurance that "everything possible would be done to improve conditions in the coalfield generally and not only in the New Town area".

It was thus left to the Planning Authority, Durham County Council, to determine the future of the villages of the Rural District in

relation to Peterlee, within the framework of the County Development Plan (completed in 1951).

The central component of the County Council's planning policy was that, given limited resources, growth and redevelopment should only be permitted and encouraged in the larger, most economically viable settlements. Thus, capital was to be injected into sub-regional centres whilst smaller settlements - notably pit villages where the colliery had closed or had only a short-term future - would receive little or no new development. All settlements were placed in one of four categories; category 'A' centres would be encouraged to expand whilst category 'D' villages were condemned to years of neglect and eventual extinction.

Within this strategy of "re-grouping" (of population, housing, economic and social activity) the County planners regarded Peterlee as the category 'A' settlement in Easington R.D. whilst the surrounding villages were placed in category 'C', meaning that "only sufficient capital should be invested in these communities to cater for the needs of a reduced population."⁽¹⁾ To the County Council, the designation of Peterlee thus represented a not unwelcome fait accompli, which dovetailed neatly into its own planning strategy. Taking the Designation Order quite literally, the County Council anticipated that almost all of the R.D.'s rehousing needs would be met at Peterlee, with the corollary that new housing in the villages would not be allowed except in special circumstances where, for example, it was deemed necessary to "maintain village shape and convenience".

In the first few years after Peterlee's designation and even after the publication of the County Development Plan it was barely realised that Peterlee's growth would be accompanied by - indeed,

(1) County Development Plan, Written Analysis, 1951, p.77.

might be dependent upon - the decline of the surrounding villages. Rather, it was commonly felt that Peterlee would reduce the pressure on housing in the villages by providing accommodation primarily for those families "living in" with relatives and without a house of their own. It was not understood that people displaced by slum clearance might not be re-housed in their villages but have to move to Peterlee. Moreover, the effects of the policy were, at first, masked by the fact that it had been necessary for the Minister to allow some rebuilding in the villages in the period 1948-50 owing to the long delays in building at Peterlee.

Subsequently, as Peterlee's housing stock expanded, the implications for the villages became clearer. Easington R.D.C. was increasingly restrained in building new Council houses in the villages. The Council's house-building programme during the 1950s was pared down to little more than 100 completions a year - about 50% of the pre-war rate of construction. Whilst this approximated to the rate of slum-clearance, most of the new housing which was permitted was provided in those villages most distant from Peterlee. The Minister had allowed this compromise but declared that replacing houses in the villages adjacent to Peterlee would be "obviously wrong since residents there could be most conveniently rehoused in the New Town".⁽¹⁾

However, Easington R.D.C., under some pressure from the Parish Councils, sought the full replacement of slum-cleared houses in all the villages. In effect, the R.D.C. wanted to ignore Peterlee, and to "revert to building in the villages, possibly leaving the New Town to try to attract people from outside the area".⁽²⁾ The County Council saw this as an unacceptable deviation from the County Development Plan. In an attempt to resolve this conflict of

(1) Comments of Minister of Housing and Local Government to Easington R.D.C. in 1953, quoted in Easington Town Map, Written Analysis, Draft, 1958, p.9.

(2) Interpretation of Easington R.D.C.'s position given by the County Planning Officer, quoted in Leishman, 1971, p.132.

interests and intentions and establish a clearly defined, detailed, planning policy, the County Council decided to prepare a Town Map for the R.D.

Whilst the Town Map was being prepared and discussed by the two authorities, opposition was mounting in the villages against proposals to rehouse people at Peterlee. The issue - "the people versus the plan" - is well-illustrated by the case of Hesleden, as described in a contemporary newspaper article (Plate 19). The replacement of houses at Hesleden was hardly defensible in planning terms but the views of the people to be affected provided compelling human arguments against the plan. The battle for survival in which the residents of Hesleden were involved - and eventually lost - was one which was repeated time and again not only in the Easington R.D. but also in the rest of the County. Even today, and despite some relaxation of the village policy, some villages are still fighting against the condition of "benign neglect" imposed upon them by being labelled 'C' or 'D' category villages.

The situation in Easington R.D. reached a climax and was formally settled as a result of the Public Inquiry into the County Council's Town Map proposals held at Easington in September 1960. In the draft Town Map, prepared by the County planners in 1958, it was acknowledged⁽¹⁾ that there was "increasing opposition to the movement to Peterlee of people from demolished slum property".

(1) Easington Town Map, Written Analysis, Draft, 1958, p.10. Town Maps (usually prepared for urban areas) present detailed planning proposals for an area, deriving from the more general treatment given in County Development Plans. When approved by the Minister, a Town Map becomes a part of the Development Plan. Both are statutory documents prepared under the provisions of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. (Development Plans are currently being replaced by new Structure Plans and Town Maps are being superseded by District Plans).

HESLEDEN ISSUE IS THE PEOPLE VERSUS PLAN

'Save Village' Call

HESLEDEN folk are angered by a Durham County Council proposal to demolish 178 houses in the village and re-house the residents at Peterlee. The controversy started by the proposal is, in essence, a conflict between the aims of the planners and the reluctance of people to be "planned for."

The planner's view is that the proposal is for the general good; the villagers say that people should not be compelled to move.

The planner points out that Hesleden lacks social facilities; Hesleden claims that community's identity will be destroyed.

"I am positive that the village will fight to the bitter end in this thing," declared 91-year-old Mr George White, of 3 West Terrace, who was sixty years a miner.

'Don't like it'

Mr Christopher Stainson, of 14 West Terrace, 45-year-old Secretary of Hesleden Workmen's Club, who for 15 years served in the Durham Light Infantry said: "Everyone is against the proposal. I saw people shuffled about in my Army days, and I know what it's like. People don't like it. It is completely un-British" was the way in which Mr. J. B. Smith of 12 Double Burdon



THE REV. J. F. SHREEVE
"There is a good community life here"

Her husband said many people were wondering why there was so little industry in Peterlee. But he added, perhaps it was just as well for it might easily attract miners from the pits. "They would not want that to happen," he said.

Mr Derek Ebbelwhite (37), who runs Hesleden's sub-post office, said he had heard reports that by way of compensation for the loss of the centre of the village the County would "plant a few trees," and perhaps lay a playing field. But nothing, in fact, could compensate for the loss.

"Why should it be that in this age, people are told where to go and their village taken away from them," he asked. "I have lived here for the past few years. I have made my home here, and I would not swap Hesleden for anything," said Mr. Ebbelwhite.

The Vicar of Hesleden, the Rev. J. F. Shreeve, points out that there was something for everyone in Hesleden.

"We have a good community life so why smash it up?" he said.

Mr. Shreeve added that many people in the village owned, or were buying their houses. If those people moved to Peterlee, they would be faced with the prospect of paying for two houses.

Three generations had been born and grown up in the village, so it was not surprising that the villagers did not want to leave. He was sure that, although some of the houses might be old, they could quite easily be modernized.

Whipping boy

Although Peterlee Development Corporation prefers not to enter into the controversy, Mr A. V. Williams, the Corpora-

tion's general manager, agreed at the request of the Northern Daily Mail to make a statement.

It was necessary, he said, in the light of the controversy, to bring several points to the public's notice.

"I want to point out that while Peterlee must inevitably be a useful whipping boy for the disappointments and frustrations of the slum clearance programme the new town does, perhaps, add a material contribution to the well-being of the area."

He added that the Hesleden controversy was part of a pattern that would become increasingly clear as the Easington slum clearance programme got under way.

Major purpose

He also pointed out that one of the major purposes of Peterlee was to assist in the re-housing of people from slum areas within Easington Rural District.

Until now, the Corporation had not been faced with that problem.



MR. CHRISTOPHER STAINSON

"People don't like being shifted about."

Nearly £7,000,000 in capital investment had been expended in the new town by the Corporation and other bodies, and more than 2,300 houses were now occupied.

"Even so the Corporation has a waiting list it will take five years to clear, building at the present rate of 500 houses a year," he added.

This demand had been constant over the years, and was, in fact, increasing.

Rents in the new town were inevitably high. "The prospec-



This is the main street of Hesleden, the village that is fighting a Durham County Council demolition proposal. "If we wanted busy streets we would live in a city," said one of the residents.—1467 N.D.M.

tive tenant, therefore, has to think very carefully before he accepts a tenancy."

Worth price

"In view of the demand, it is clear that there are many in the Easington district who voluntarily accept those commitments because they feel that the standard of housing they are offered, and the good environment they enjoy, is worth the price," Mr Williams continued.

It must be realized that though the Corporation would do everything in its power to give priority to those in need through displacement, voluntary demand would still have to be met.

Mr. Williams emphasized that Peterlee had relieved, and was relieving the pressure of housing demands in all the villages and towns of the rural district.

The County Council's standpoint was explained by a planning official.

The County had sold in its Development Plan, which was approved by the Minister of Housing in 1954, that development generally in the Easington district was very largely governed by the building of Peterlee, which would draw people from the mining villages in the district.

Poor property

Hesleden was predominately a mining community, and contained a considerable amount of low-standard property.

The village also lacked many social facilities.

"The Plan therefore envisaged that some people from Hesleden should be re-housed at Peterlee."

In preparing the Plan, the County had had a statutory duty to consult Easington R.D.C., but the official pointed out, at the public inquiry held in 1952, neither the Rural Council nor anyone else raised any objection.



MR. A. V. WILLIAMS

"Rents in Peterlee are inevitably high."

Street described the proposal. "Why," he asked, "should anyone be forced to move anywhere?"

Mr Smith, his wife and four children, lived in Peterlee for four years, moving to Hesleden in January. Now, since their house is among the first due to be demolished, they are faced with having to return to the new town, where "rents are high."

Grand spirit

"We like the grand community spirit of Hesleden," said Mr Smith, an insurance agent.

Mrs. Smith admitted that Peterlee was a healthy, clean-looking town, but pointed out that the cost of living there was higher than in Hesleden. "I suppose that is because it is new and growing," she said.



"Hesleden will fight this proposal," declares 91-year-old Mr. George White, the village's oldest resident. He was a miner for 38 years.—1446 N.D.M.



Births by the Ebbelwhite family in their home in Front Street are Mr. and Mrs. Derek Ebbelwhite. Married a year, they do not want to leave Hesleden, or lose the many friends they have made since they settled in the village. "Why should they try to break up a happy community?" asks Mr. Ebbelwhite.—1466 N.D.M.



At one end of the main street rises the pit winding gear. The colliery is no longer worked, but the millhead is a reminder that coal once made Hesleden a thriving village.—1443 N.D.M.



Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Smith and their four children came to Hesleden in January. Their home is one of the first due to be demolished, so they may have to move again. "It is most un-British to force people to do anything," complains Mr. Smith.—1444 N.D.M.



This street, typical of many in the pit villages, is scheduled for clearance. Some of the houses, on at least three houses there are television aerials.—1442 N.D.M.

This opposition, they surmised, "arises from three main causes:

- a) the attachment of older people to villages in which they have lived for many years
- b) the desire of miners to live close to their collieries
- c) the much higher rents charged for houses in Peterlee than for similar houses built by the R.D.C. in the villages."

However, whilst reluctance to move away from the villages was "understandable", the planners maintained that "it cannot be allowed to blind anyone to the advantages to be gained by this and succeeding generations from the existence of a new and balanced community as a focus for the District" - a statement highly reminiscent of the view put forward by the Easington Councillors fifteen years earlier.

The County Council argued that the successful growth of Peterlee depended upon demand from slum-cleared families; by deciding to meet much of this demand at Peterlee, the New Town's growth would be guaranteed. It was estimated that about 10,550 families in the R.D., comprising 2,970 without separate homes and 7,580 in houses due to be demolished, would need new houses by 1974. Of this total, the County planners proposed that 49% would be rehoused at Peterlee. This meant that not only would those without their own homes have no chance of a house in their own villages - as had been the case during the 1950s - but also a substantial proportion of families displaced by slum clearance would be "forced" to accept being rehoused at Peterlee. In accordance with these proposals, redevelopment in the villages would be "minimal". However, despite the fact that all were 'C' category settlements, the amount of replacement housing to be allowed varied considerably, with the larger villages such as Murton and Easington being permitted extensive redevelopment and the smaller villages receiving little or no new housing.

These proposals were strongly opposed at the Public Inquiry. Easington R.D.C. argued that Peterlee's waiting list was so long (containing about 2,000 applicants in 1959) that there was no need to guarantee demand by preventing large-scale house-building in the villages. During the Inquiry, which lasted for over a week, almost every village added their own objections; 258 objections were heard, all but seven of which concerned the proposal to limit building in the villages and transfer people to Peterlee. The objections from South Hetton were especially vociferous, describing "Farewell Squalor" as an "infamous document" and "the author's 'Mein Kampf'".⁽¹⁾ It was declared that

"As a free people the residents of South Hetton wished to make it clear, without any bravado, that they were not going to Peterlee. If the Minister could not permit new houses in South Hetton the people would prefer to remain in their slums rather than live in a place to which they had been compulsorily moved" ⁽²⁾

The South Hetton objectors argued, as did representatives from other villages, that inconvenience and hardship would result if they moved to Peterlee. They would have to pay high rents and face substantial travelling costs for the long journey to work; besides which they had a lively community and the village was not, they maintained, squalid.

The Minister's Inspector pointed out⁽³⁾, correctly, that the County Council's proposals, as they stood, made considerable concessions to the villages in that some building was to be permitted, whereas "Farewell Squalor" had presented the view that almost all new housing was to be provided at Peterlee. Nevertheless, the outcome of the Town Map Inquiry was that further concessions

- (1) Sunderland Echo, 21.9.60. See also "Go to Peterlee? We Might as Well Emigrate, say S. Hetton Folk", Sunderland Echo, 17.4.59.
- (2) Easington Town Map Inquiry, Inspector's Report, Pt.2, objection No. 186, para. 22.
- (3) Ibid., Pt.1, para.11.

to the villages were granted and justified, taking into account possible hardship and the glaring inconsistencies in the County's proposals in terms of their differential impact on each village. The Minister increased the housing allocations for South Hetton, Thornley, Haswell, Hesleden and Deaf Hill, with the result that now only 35% of those requiring houses in the R.D. by 1974 would have to move to Peterlee. In other words, most slum clearance needs would be met in the villages themselves, leaving those without separate accommodation to move to Peterlee. The major exceptions were the villages of Shotton, Hesleden and Haswell Plough which received much smaller allocations than would be necessary to meet slum clearance demand.⁽¹⁾ In almost all cases, however, villages were planned to lose population - and have done so, possibly at a faster rate than was anticipated.

There is no doubt that the Minister's decision represented a victory for the villages; the R.D.C. had succeeded in securing permission for a considerable amount of new housing despite the fact that this contradicted the policy which they themselves had instigated by originally proposing the New Town scheme. One informant⁽²⁾ has suggested that the R.D.C.'s case was accepted because neither Peterlee Development Corporation nor the Ministry wanted to see Peterlee "full of slum clearance families". Partly this may have been because of an increasing concern to achieve social balance but it also reflected the Corporation's derogatory view of slum clearance tenants. Evidence for this latter assertion

(1) It should be noted that Horden was in a rather different position from the other villages in that no demolition was planned there until after 1974. However, it was anticipated that at least 540 people without separate accommodation would require housing and that 85% of this need would be met at Peterlee. This helps to explain the high proportion of ex-residents of Horden now living in Peterlee (see section 3.2.c below).

(2) Interview with a senior local government officer, 21.1.76.

is provided by correspondence between the Corporation and the R.D.C. in 1964 concerning the rehousing of families from Hesleden. The Corporation was very reluctant to accept as tenants families who "on inspection" were found to be "quite beyond the pale". The Corporation was evidently unhappy about its responsibility:

"it is obvious that if such tenants were placed in Peterlee, within a very short time they would either voluntarily move back to a slum area or be evicted by the Corporation leaving, I might add, a house in a dreadful state of repair".⁽¹⁾

Given this attitude it would appear reasonable to suggest that the Corporation supported the R.D.C.'s claims for new housing⁽²⁾ to reduce its own obligations. The approved Town Map did, in fact, leave Peterlee with very limited responsibilities (mainly concerning residents of Shotton and Hesleden) for rehousing slum clearance families - a state of affairs no doubt more acceptable to the Corporation than that which would have resulted from the County Council's proposals.

During the 1960s, in accordance with the Town Map, the R.D.C. proceeded with its demolition and rebuilding programme. An average of 150 houses a year were built, providing new accommodation for most of those affected by slum clearance. The situation prevailing in the 1950s remained in the 1960s: most of those leaving the villages to live in Peterlee were without a home of their own and, predominantly, comprised newly-married couples. It should be noted also that, then as now, very few houses were built by the private sector. Among the reasons for this was that most land zoned for housing had been purchased by the R.D.C. and requests by private builders to develop other sites were repeatedly rejected by the County Council.

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- (1) Letter from Chief Housing Officer, Peterlee Development Corporation to Clerk of Easington R.D.C., dated 10.3.64. Copy in R.D.C. File AH8.
- (2) The Corporation, as silent "observers" at the Public Inquiry did not have the opportunity to formally support the R.D.C. on that occasion. It is highly probable, however, that the Ministry sought the Corporation's opinions directly and informally.

To an extent the villages had won a hollow victory at the Town Map inquiry, since they were still faced with population decline and the emigration of young people to Peterlee. But in the 1960s several of the villages were to experience serious economic decline as well, following the closure of most of the older, inland collieries (see chapter IV). Hence, planning policy, together with the "rationalisation" policies effected by the N.C.B., sealed the fate of the villages - and defined a varying pattern of decline within the R.D. The census illustrates the overall demographic consequences (Tables 3.1 to 3.3). Over the period 1951 to 1971 the total stock of housing in the villages remained fairly static because the replacement of slum-cleared houses by Council houses was permitted. At the same time, over 6,500 houses were built at Peterlee, bringing the R.D.'s total stock to over 28,000. But the R.D. population also remained at about the same level, owing to continued emigration from the area. Very modest population growth in the 1950s was followed by a decade during which emigration almost completely countered natural growth; much of this emigration can be accounted for by the transfer of miners from closed pits to other coalfields (notably South Yorkshire). In general terms, the result has been that the density of occupation - household size - has diminished significantly. Peterlee's share of the total population has progressively increased, such that its growth is almost exactly matched by the decline of the villages. Not only have the villages "lost" nearly 18,000 people over this twenty-year period⁽¹⁾ but there has developed a very marked age discrepancy between the villages and Peterlee, largely as a result of age-specific migration processes; this is discussed further in section 3.4 below.

(1) Note that this does not mean that all those leaving the villages went to Peterlee; the pattern of migration is more complicated than that. Rather, it is stressed that the restructuring of housing opportunities effected changes in relative shares of population between settlements.

Table 3.1Distribution of the housing stock

	No. of dwellings*		
	1951	1961	1971
Peterlee	78	3,676	6,655
Easington R.D. villages	22,102	22,785	22,094
Easington R.D. total	22,180	26,461	28,759

*occupied permanent and non-permanent private dwellings

Source: Census of Population, 1951, 1961 and 1971.

Table 3.2Density of Occupation

	Persons per dwelling		
	1951	1961	1971
Peterlee	-	3.6	3.3
Easington R.D. villages	3.7	3.2	2.9
Easington R.D. total	3.7	3.2	3.0

Source: Census of Population, 1951, 1961 and 1971.

Table 3.3Population Distribution

	1951	1961	1971
Peterlee	298	13,331	21,846
Easington R.D. villages	81,872	71,855	63,584
Easington R.D. total	82,170	85,186	85,430

Source: Census of Population, 1951, 1961 and 1971

Another effect of the planning policy of the County Council was that many villages suffered from years of neglect tantamount to "planning blight". Haswell, for example, denied new housing under the 1951 Development Plan had to wait until 1965 before replacement houses were sanctioned, under the provisions of the Town Map. By that time the centre of the village was almost derelict and many condemned houses, still occupied, were reportedly on the verge of collapse (Northern Echo, 17.11.64). But, compared with Shotton, Haswell has been fortunate. Repeated attempts⁽¹⁾ to secure new housing for Shotton, culminating in a Public Inquiry there in 1964, met with failure. Shotton, penalised by its proximity to Peterlee, had to wait until 1976 for redevelopment. Meanwhile the village experienced decay, decline and dereliction; in some respects the condition of Shotton in the early 1970s was as desperate as that described by Priestley in the 1930s.

In recent years the Town Map policy has been revised and relaxed, enabling positive improvements to be made to the villages and allowing the redevelopment of the villages adjacent to Peterlee. In 1969 the Minister indicated that the R.D.C. would be permitted to undertake a larger housing programme with full replacement of slum cleared houses; if necessary undeveloped land could be used whereas previously this had not been allowed under the Town Map provisions. This change in policy was introduced largely to facilitate the R.D.C.'s large-scale slum clearance programme (affecting the newer coastal villages for the first time) and was now regarded as acceptable since Peterlee was within sight of its population target.

(1) See "Rats Appear as Shotton Fights to Live", Northern Echo, 21.11.64 and "Shotton's Appeal is for a Way of Life, Inquiry Told", Sunderland Echo, 3.12.64.

Several factors gave rise to further discussion (in 1974-5) on a greater relaxation of housing policy. On the one hand, there remained a housing shortage which Peterlee, now at the end of its housing programme, was clearly unable to solve. Secondly, the new Easington District Council had now become responsible for local planning and was thus able, at last, to consider major redevelopment of the villages. Moreover, Central Government proposals to transfer New Town housing to the District Council effectively ruled out further house-building by the Corporation. The District Council was therefore left with the responsibility of formulating and executing a housing strategy for the District⁽¹⁾ and former planning constraints were, accordingly, removed. For the first time since the 1930s, the Council has been permitted to build for "general needs", not just slum clearance.

The development of Peterlee has clearly had a significant - and in many ways an adverse - impact on the surrounding villages. Several of these effects are considered in subsequent parts of this study. For the moment, however, we focus upon the population movements associated with the growth of Peterlee (and the corresponding decline of the villages), bearing in mind the contexts and chronology of events outlined above.

(1) The basic dimensions of the strategy were set out in the District Council's Easington Interim Housing Study. An assessment of housing need and site availability (1976).

3. Aspects of population growth, migration and structure.

3.1 Introduction

The following sections examine the build-up of Peterlee's population, the processes of migration and housing allocation, and the characteristics of Peterlee's population structure. Owing to the limitations of available data, we are here concerned mainly with tenants (and ex-tenants) of Corporation rented housing; this is not a major drawback, however, since only a small minority (about 13%) of residents are owner-occupiers.⁽¹⁾

The first part of the discussion (section 3.2) looks at allocation policy and the characteristics of those taking up Corporation tenancies. This section focusses primarily on the process of immigration (defined as movement into the designated area) and variations in the intake over time.

Section 3.3 deals with the reverse process - tenancy termination which, in nearly all cases, entails emigration from the designated area. Emigration is of considerable importance in determining the structural features of the population since housing turnover rates have been relatively high; between 1951 and 1976 the Corporation let houses to over 18,000 new tenants but, over that period, some 11,000 tenancies have been terminated.

To conclude, two principal characteristics of the overall population structure are considered in section 3.4: age and socio-economic composition.

(1) The two principal data sources used are the Chief Housing Officer's annual reports to the Corporation Board (P.D.C. File AR4) for the period up to 1965 and, from 1966, computer printouts from the Department of the Environment New Town Records (a migration monitoring system established by the D.O.E. in 1966). It should be noted that about half of the owner-occupiers, who bought their houses from the Corporation, will have originally been "new tenants" and their characteristics consequently recorded in these data sources.

3.2 Housing allocation and population intake

a) Allocation procedures and policies

The Corporation's principal guideline in allocating housing is given by its original directive - to provide housing mainly for people from Easington R.D.⁽¹⁾ - and the procedure by which tenants are chosen is a reflection of this policy.

A Joint Allocations Committee, comprising members of the Corporation and Easington R.D.C., is responsible for allocating at least 75% of houses becoming available. In practice this Committee, which has been in operation since 1951, deals with all local applications and ensures that, as far as possible, local applicants are given priority and their housing needs are met. However, the Corporation reserves the right to allocate up to 25% of the available housing stock without reference to this Committee. This enables an internal Corporation committee, the Key Allocations Committee, to provide housing for key workers and those with specialists skills who are moving to Peterlee from areas outside the R.D. Such allocations are often made in co-operation with employers; the provision of housing for key workers is one of the ways by which the Corporation seeks to attract industrial development. In addition, applications may be considered for "special cases", including unmarried mothers, separated persons and referrals from the social and voluntary services. Such cases may be put before the Joint Allocations Committee or, if they are resident outside the area, they are considered by the Corporation's Housing Committee. The latter, which deals mainly with arrears and evictions, is made up of Corporation housing staff and nominated Board Members.

(1) Following local government reform in 1974 this commitment was revised to include the area covered by the new Easington District. Resulting changes in allocation practices have had a negligible effect.

Although this framework of procedure and general policy has remained almost unchanged during the course of Peterlee's development, the outcome - meaning the characteristics of the intake - has varied very considerably, largely in response to changes in housing supply and demand. Hence, during the 1950s, local demand far outstripped supply, with the result that the Joint Allocations Committee had a very active role, rationing housing allocation on the basis of need. By contrast, Peterlee in the 1960s experienced difficulty in finding tenants for its growing housing stock. At that time almost all local applications were accepted, as indeed were many applications from people outside the area who had no claim to key worker status but merely required temporary rented accommodation. The Allocation Committees ceased to have a significant function and it became impossible to pursue the original policy directive; in the early 1960s a majority of the intake came from outside Easington R.D. Since 1972-3 the situation has been reversed and a serious housing shortage has led to a detailed redefinition of housing allocation policy. Key workers and specialist workers have been accorded top priority for housing, followed by "second generation" Peterlee couples (newly married sons and daughters of existing tenants) and "second generation" couples from the villages.⁽¹⁾ Thus, as a result, Peterlee's housing function has become progressively more limited. This brief resumé of allocation policies and practices, discussed in greater detail below, serves to demonstrate the point that a fairly static basis of intent and procedure may, by force of circumstance, produce varied results.

Finally, although the most important factor in the Corporation's allocation policy is the geographical origin of applicants, other

(1) This listing of categories in order of priority is extracted from a Corporation handout Explanatory Notes for Applicants, produced by the Housing Department in 1974. This document points out that the priority system is "designed primarily to attract Industrial and Commercial development to the Town and to provide for newly-married couples in the District".

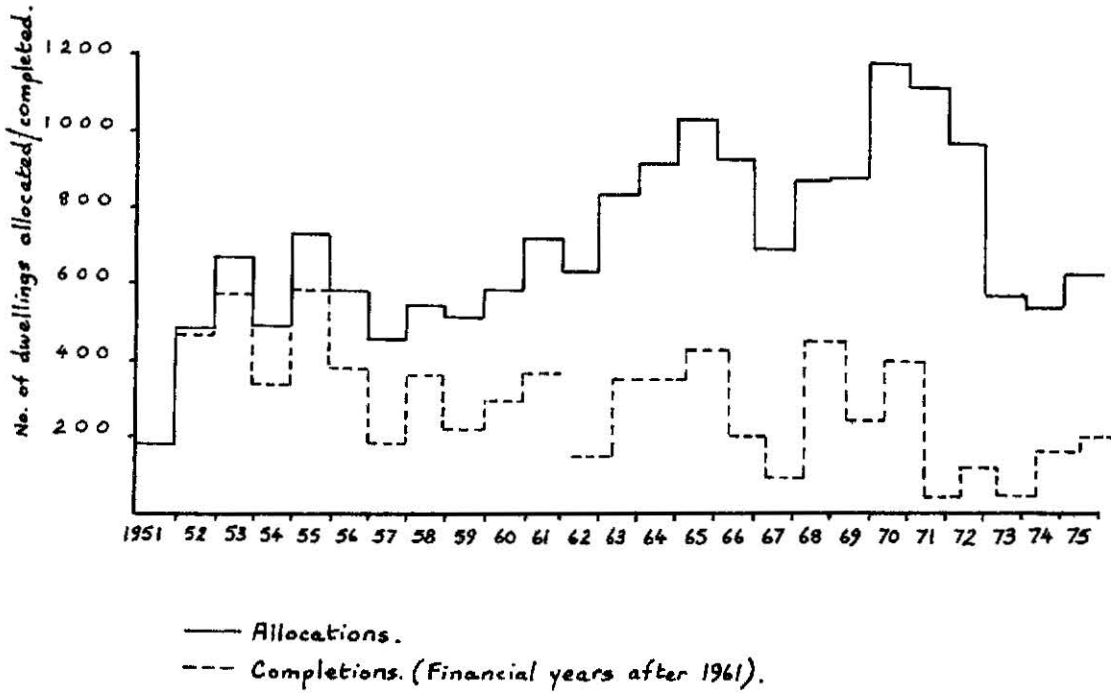
factors are taken into account. In common with many Local Authorities the Corporation does not normally consider applications from single persons. Nor are applications considered from those who are, or have been, owner-occupiers. Exceptions may be made, however, for key workers and, very occasionally, "special cases". As far as possible the Corporation avoids allocating houses to applicants who are unemployed (and of working age). But since it has always been the case that a large proportion of local employment is at collieries surrounding, but outside, the designated area, possession of a job within Peterlee is not a necessary qualification for housing.

b) The nature and volume of tenancy allocations

The number of Corporation houses available to let to new tenants varies with the number of new completions and the number of re-lets made available by tenancy termination. In the early stages of development, allocations and completions are closely correlated but at the end, when the housing programme has been completed, the only houses becoming available are re-lets, hence terminations and allocations are exactly matched. The data for Peterlee (Fig. 3.5) demonstrate this, showing that re-lets have progressively increased as a proportion of allocations - the difference between annual allocations and completions having increased over the course of development. Detailed data for recent years (Table 3.4) point to significant variations from year to year, reflecting smaller scale changes of pace and policy in the housing programme and fluctuations in the housing turnover rate.

The two components of the system, completions and terminations, thus define the level of supply. It can be seen that one component can counteract the other; thus, in the late 1950s completions were reduced but the previous level of allocations was maintained by an

Fig. 3.5 Corporation tenancies: annual allocations and completions.



Sources: Reports of Chief Housing Officer, P. D. C.
 Annual Reports, P. D. C.
 D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (NR) 3B.

Table 3.4 New houses and re-lets as a proportion of annual allocations.

Year	New houses as percentage of total allocation	Re-lets
1969	12.8	87.2
1970	31.9	68.1
1971	14.6	85.4
1972	13.5	86.5
1973	7.1	92.9
1974	11.2	88.8
1975	19.2	80.2

Source: D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (NR) 21B.

increase in the number of terminations. This increase did not stem, however, from a change in the rate of turnover but rather resulted from the same rate being applied to a larger stock of houses (see section 3.3 below). The difficulties experienced during the 1960s seem to have been caused by over-supply rather than under-demand.⁽¹⁾ At that time large numbers of re-lets were becoming available, their number inflated because of increasing turnover rates. The completion of new houses only added to the Corporation's problem of finding twice as many new tenants each year than had been required a decade before. More recently turnover and completion rates fell sharply while demand remained stable, resulting in a return to the conditions of shortage witnessed in the 1950s.

c) Characteristics of the intake

The available data sources allow the division of the households allocated Corporation housing in Peterlee into three broad groups:

- 1) Immigrants - households previously resident outside the designated area.
- 2) Second Generation Peterlee Households - the sons/daughters of existing Peterlee residents taking up a new and separate tenancy on marriage.
- 3) Rehousing intake - households already resident in Peterlee but not Corporation tenants. In most cases rehoused as a result of displacement by Corporation activities (e.g. demolition).

Within this classification the majority - more than 90% - of the intake were immigrants. Since Peterlee was built on a virgin site, very few existing residents have been rehoused.⁽²⁾ Internally-generated demand from Peterlee's second generation has considerably

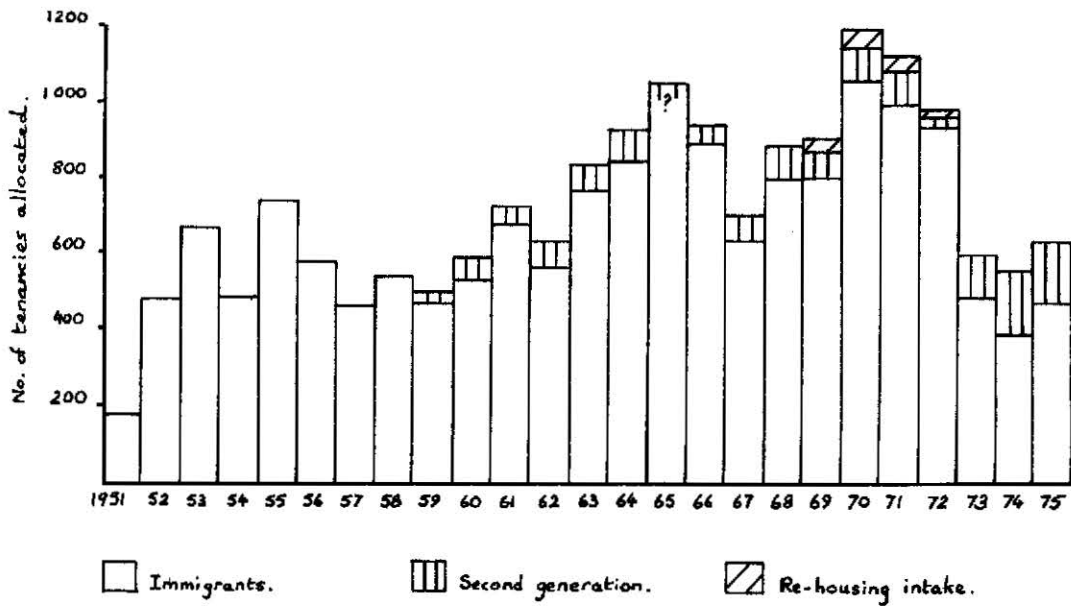
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- (1) However, it could be argued that part of the potential housing demand - from slum clearance - had been taken away as a result of the Minister's amendments to the Town Map. In other words, the County Councils concern to seek to guarantee demand by severely limiting village redevelopment may have had an economic (but perhaps not social) justification.
 - (2) The majority of those "re-housed" came from a pre-fab estate on the edge of Horden, sold to the Corporation by the District Council and then cleared to make way for an access road to Peterlee's industrial estates.

increased in recent years, both numerically and as a proportion of the intake (see Fig. 3.6) and these applicants are given the highest priority by the Joint Allocation Committee; their acceptance as tenants is virtually automatic.

Fig. 3.7 shows the average size of incoming families since 1951, with disaggregation by category (including local and non-local immigrants) for 1966 and subsequent years. Two major features emerge. Firstly, the relatively large size of families arriving in the early years reflects the severity of the local housing shortage and the results of an allocation system based on need, favouring the larger, more overcrowded families. Secondly, we note the marked reduction in household size in the past few years. Notwithstanding national trends in the same downward direction, this is partly a consequence of the proportionate growth in second generation intake, both from Peterlee and the villages. The situation is further illustrated by Fig. 3.8, which shows that a majority of the intake comprises married couples without children. This also amplifies a point made earlier: that Peterlee caters largely for married couples or the conventional small nuclear family.

Variations in the geographical origin of new tenants for 1955 and subsequent years are shown in Fig. 3.9. In the mid-1950s over 70% of the intake came from the surrounding villages of Easington R.D. - no doubt this proportion was even greater in the early 1950s. The subsequent decline in the local intake was not compensated for by the advent of demand from second generation Peterlee applicants. By the mid-1960s more than 50% of new tenants came from places outside the R.D. and a substantial proportion (25% to 35% of the total) came from other Regions. Many outsiders came to take advantage of Peterlee's housing surplus at that time; several informants said that it was

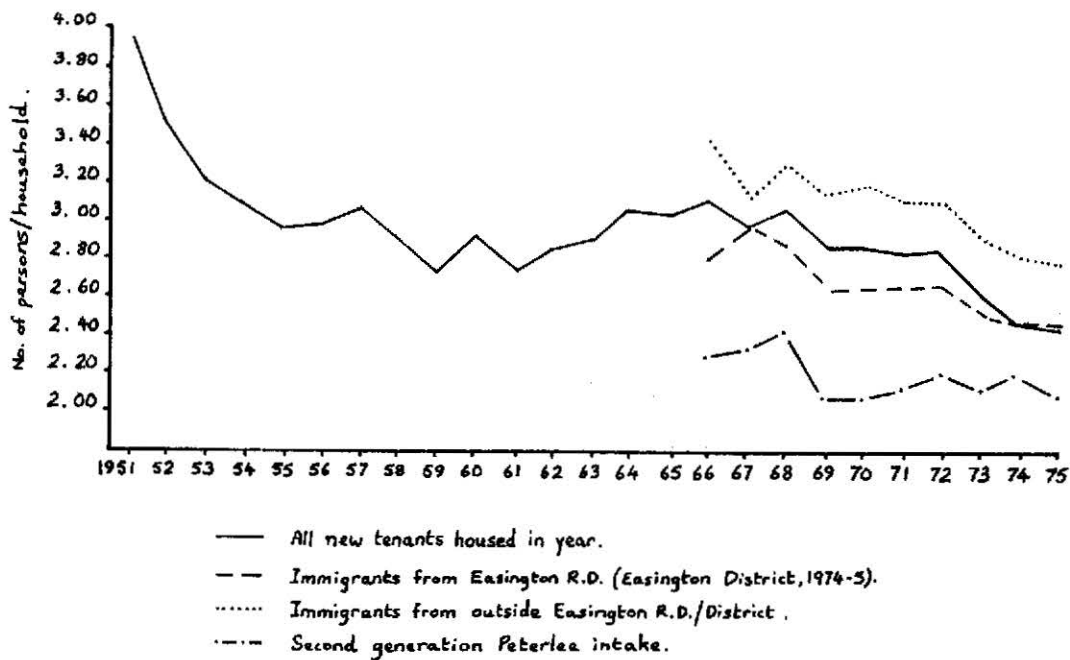
Fig. 3.6 Annual tenancy allocations, by type of intake.



Sources: Reports of Chief Housing Officer, P.D.C.

D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (NR) 21B.

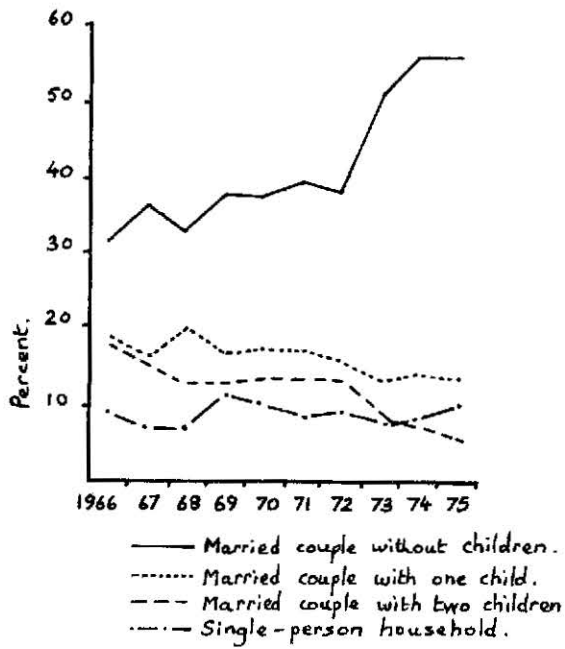
Fig. 3.7 Average size of households allocated tenancies each year, by origin.



Sources: Min. Housing & Local Government, 1967

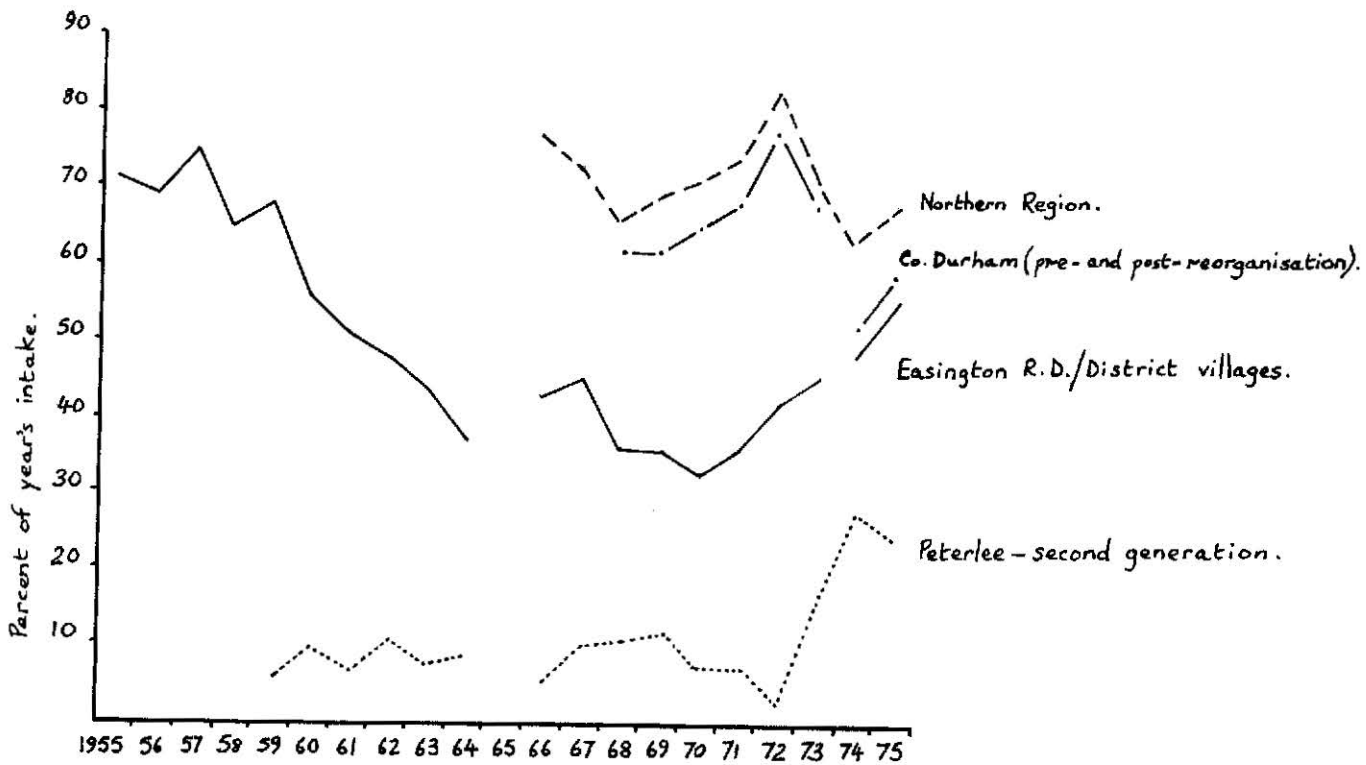
D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Tables (NR) 5A and 10B.

Fig. 3.8 Composition of households allocated tenancies



Source: D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (NR) 7B.

Fig. 3.9 Origin of new tenants.



Sources: Reports of Chief Housing Officer, P.D.C.

D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Tables (NR) 5A and 10B.

(1965 data not available).

then possible for almost anyone to walk into the Housing Department, make an application and leave with the key to a house. Currently, however, the situation is quite different to the extent that only a minority of incoming tenants originate from outside the area and most of these are key and specialist workers. In conditions of shortage, the local allocation is jealously maintained and there have been indications that the allocation of houses to outsiders is resented by local people. It is understood, however, that the Corporation will retain its right to provide key worker housing in connection with industrial development even after the stock has been transferred to the District Council (in 1978).

Further insight into the question of the origin of Peterlee residents (both tenants and owner-occupiers) was provided by the 1974 NEAS Survey.⁽¹⁾ It was found that of the 199 respondents, 5 had been born in Peterlee and of the remainder - the immigrants - 108 (56%) had come from the villages of the (former) Easington R.D. Disaggregation of this local group showed that more than half had previously been living in the two villages adjacent to Peterlee - Horden (41 respondents) and Shotton (16 respondents). This strongly suggests that Peterlee's catchment area of migrants is highly localised⁽²⁾ - or it may be that immigrants from the nearby villages are more prone to stay than those from further afield and consequently are over-represented. In either case Peterlee's main housing function in relation to its sub-region largely seems to be

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- (1) The survey data show a cross-sectional view of Peterlee's population at one point in time (1974) unlike the annual migration data presented elsewhere in this account. The sample of 199 respondents was chosen randomly from the electoral register and thus only includes adults aged 18 and over. For further details see Macourt (1975) and Hudson et.al. (1976).
- (2) This assertion seems to be supported by the data on origin by village given in the Chief Housing Officer's Reports for the period 1955-65 (see Robinson, 1975 a,b). Unfortunately, however, the DOE migration records do not tabulate origin on a village by village basis, giving only the figure for the R.D. as a whole.

Fig. 3.10 Proportion of tenants housed each year engaged in coal-mining

Year	% of incoming heads of households engaged in coal-mining
1955	44.6
1956	49.6
1957	49.4
1958	41.0
1959	38.2
1960	33.1
1961	25.0
1962	30.1
1963	22.8
1964	23.6
1965	N/A
1966	16.7
1967	16.5
1968	13.4
1969	15.1
1970	12.6
1971	16.0
1972	16.0
1973	19.2
1974	16.7

Note: The 1955-64 data refers to all heads of household taking up a tenancy in the year, whilst the 1966-74 figures refer to immigrants only (excluding second generation intake).

Sources: Reports of Chief Housing Officer, Peterlee Development Corporation 1955-64.
DOE New Towns Records, Table (NR) 15A.

effectively restricted to a smaller surrounding area than the R.D. (or the new District). This clearly relates back to the position set out in the Town Map, under the provisions of which Horden and Shotton were allowed very little new housing. The housing shortage thus perpetrated in both villages left young couples in need of a home with little choice but to move to Peterlee.

A revealing measure of the changing role of Peterlee - and the changing circumstances of the sub-region - is provided by data on the proportion of the intake of tenants (i.e. heads of household) engaged in coal mining (Fig. 3.10). In the mid-1950s nearly half the incoming tenants were miners and the proportion was probably even greater in earlier years. At that time Peterlee certainly was a "New Town for Miners". Since then the proportion of miners coming to Peterlee has steadily declined; the Census showed that only one in eight of economically active men in Peterlee was employed in mining in 1971. In the context of manpower reductions in that industry, particularly during the 1960s and early 1970s, the concept of Peterlee as a Miners' Town became untenable and it became necessary to provide a new *raison d'être* for Peterlee (see chapter IV below).

d) Reasons for moving to Peterlee

In the NEAS Survey an attempt was made to discover why people had originally moved to Peterlee.⁽¹⁾ The majority cited reasons which centred upon the availability of housing. 46% gave answers to the effect that they had been able to obtain a house in Peterlee but had not been able to do so elsewhere; 39% gave this as their only reason for moving to the town. Several provided similar answers - they had wanted a better house or required a house when they had

(1) The question was, of course, only asked of immigrants. Two "reasons" per respondent could be accommodated on the questionnaire.

married. Very few - only 11% - gave job related reasons; this reflects Peterlee's deficiencies in employment opportunities and its poor record - especially before 1974 - in industrial development. Few new firms had moved to Peterlee so that the number of key workers (usually moving with employers) was small. Peterlee's requirements for specialist workers (including professionals) have also been limited - largely to teachers and Corporation officials - and these groups of people tend to seek owner-occupation, which is more widely available outside Peterlee. Residents of both Aycliffe and Washington New Towns, where much greater success has been achieved in the sphere of industrial development, gave job related reasons as the motive for moving far more frequently than did people in Peterlee.⁽¹⁾

Finally, the very local nature of Peterlee's housing functions was indicated by replies to the question of how immigrants first got to know about Peterlee. 59% said that their awareness of the town was based on "local knowledge" and a further 31% had received information from friends and relatives. Certainly many had difficulty in remembering how they had first come to know about Peterlee; they had perhaps seen the town being built and later, when they had come to need a home of their own, had moved there because houses were readily available. For many years it has been the case that young people would almost inevitably move to Peterlee when they married, for there was little or no chance of a house in the villages in which they had been brought up.

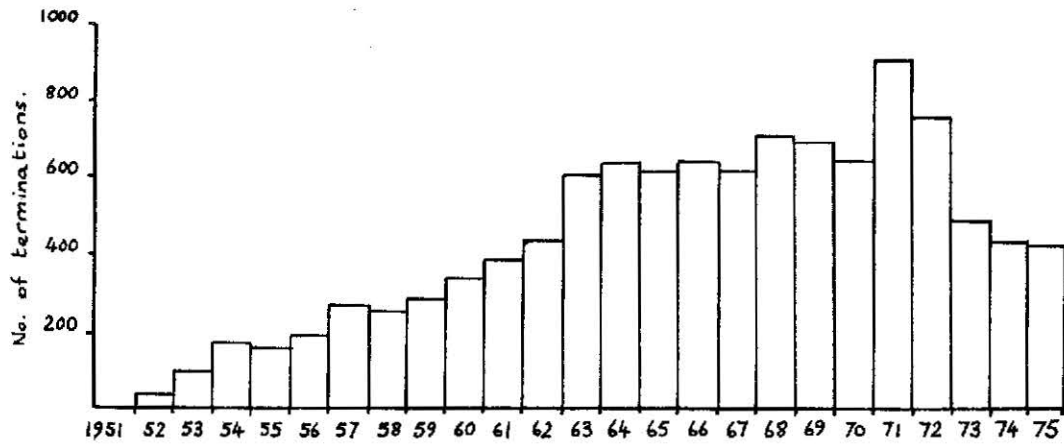
3.3 Terminated tenancies, turnover and emigration

a) The scale of tenancy termination

The annual number of Corporation tenancies terminated is shown in Fig. 3.11. Variations in the turnover rate - which removes the

(1) See Hudson et.al., 1976, pp.200-1. In the example of Aycliffe, the high proportion of people moving to the town for job reasons was also found in Karn's earlier study: Aycliffe Housing Survey (1970).

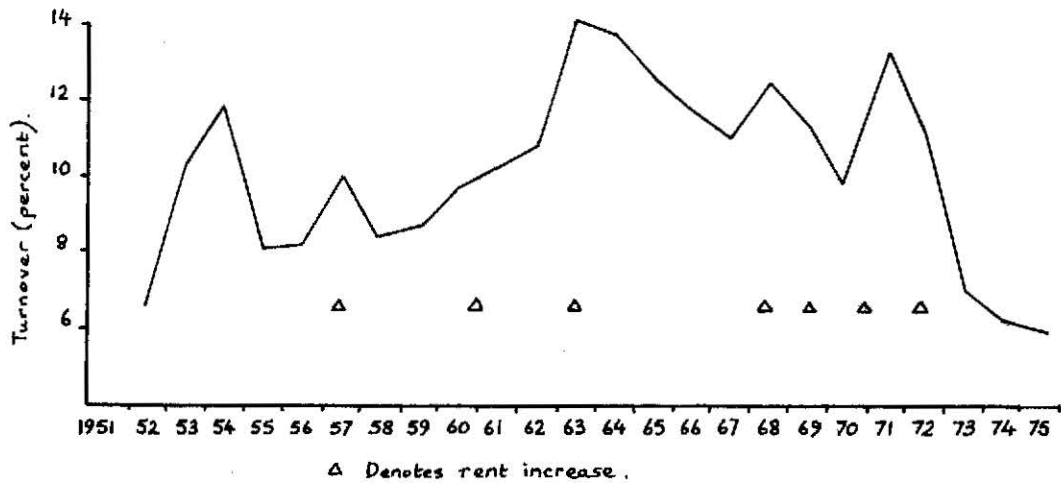
Fig. 3.11 Corporation Tenancy Terminations.



Sources: Min. of Housing & Local Government, 1967.

D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (T)3B.

Fig. 3.12 Tenancy Turnover Rates.



Sources: Min. of Housing & Local Government, 1967.

D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (T)1B.

Peterlee Development Corporation, Annual Reports.

Turnover rate = terminations expressed as a percentage of total housing stock at mid-year.

distorting effect of an expanding housing stock - are given in Fig. 3.12. It is clear from this that the level of turnover has varied considerably, reaching a maximum in the early 1960s and declining to a relatively low level at the present time; it is worth making the point that if Peterlee had maintained the high rate of turnover experienced in the 1960s, nearly twice as many houses would be made available for allocation than is currently the case.

There is evidence that the turnover rate at Peterlee was, until recently, well above levels recorded for most of the other New Towns and for the country as a whole.⁽¹⁾ This high level of mobility has had important consequences; the population structure has been affected and so too has Peterlee's social development (see chapter V below).

Before considering the data on tenancy termination, two points should be noted. Firstly, most of the available information relates only to the movement of entire households, thus excluding the migration of individuals where this does not involve surrendering a tenancy. Hence an important component of the overall migration pattern is not accounted for. Secondly, the termination of a tenancy is almost always accompanied by emigration from the designated area⁽²⁾; the terminological distinction is, however, retained in describing the data presented below.

b) Tenancy duration

Data on the length of time households stayed in Peterlee before giving up their tenancy (Tables 3.5 and 3.6) indicate the significant

-
- (1) DOE figures suggest that during the late 1960s, Peterlee's turnover rate was comparable with some of the Provincial New Towns but was more than double that recorded by London Ring New Towns. The annual rate for England as a whole in 1960-2 has been estimated at 7% (Cullingworth, 1965, p.58).
 - (2) The main exceptions are tenancy terminations resulting from a (lone) tenant's death and terminations followed by the purchase of a house in Peterlee. Migration within Peterlee, where this involves transfer of a tenancy from one Corporation house to another, is discussed separately in section 4.1 below.

contribution which short-term residents have made to the pattern of turnover.

Figures for the period up to 1965 are given in terms of cohort decay (Table 3.5). Each "cohort" is the annual intake and is, of course, 100% complete on arrival; thereafter some percentage of the total leaves in the subsequent period. Thus, to take an example, 3.4% of the 1955 cohort left during the year in which they arrived and five years later, by the end of 1960, 40.9% of the cohort had left. Looking at the figures given in this Table it emerges that not only was short-term residence a characteristic of many of those who left but also that the tendency for people to leave within a few months of arrival became more marked. Hence, in the early 1950s only about 4% left in the year of arrival but by 1964-5 10% did so. Similarly, 33% of the 1963 cohort stayed for under three years, compared with 24% of those arriving in 1952. This situation, together with an overall high turnover rate and substantial internal movement within the town, led to Peterlee being labelled a "transit camp". When turnover reached a peak of more than 14% in 1963, one newspaper chose the headline "New Town's Symbol - A Removal Van", pointing out that altogether nearly a quarter of Peterlee's population had moved during the year, either leaving the town or transferring their tenancy (Northern Echo, 29.11.63).

Fig. 3.12 included an indication of rent increases and there does appear to be some correspondence between these increases and peaks in the turnover rate. This seems to be confirmed by the cohort data which demonstrate that rent increases - especially the steep rises imposed in 1957 and 1963 - coincide with the revival of annual rates which had previously settled into a diminishing marginal trend. But aside from periodic increases, the question of rents was an issue of

Table 3.5 Peterlee Corporation terminated tenancies, analysed by cohorts.

Year of arrival ("cohort group")	Year of termination of tenancy															Total departed by 31/12/65
	PERCENTAGES															
	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	
1951	-	5.0	10.6	10.1	5.6	6.1	4.5	6.7	6.7	2.8	1.7	5.0	3.9	2.2	2.2	73.2
1952		3.7	11.0	9.1	4.3	4.1	5.6	5.8	3.5	4.3	3.9	2.1	4.6	3.3	1.0	66.5
1953			3.6	11.2	7.2	6.4	7.0	3.4	3.6	4.3	4.2	3.7	6.6	3.9	2.4	67.5
1954				5.7	9.3	7.3	8.7	6.1	4.5	5.7	4.9	5.1	3.9	2.8	3.3	66.5
1955					3.4	7.9	9.1	7.6	5.9	7.0	4.9	3.0	6.0	2.9	3.0	60.7
1956						3.8	9.0	7.1	6.9	6.2	5.7	5.9	6.2	4.7	3.6	59.0
1957							4.2	7.5	10.4	7.1	5.8	5.8	5.8	6.9	4.4	57.7
1958								3.1	8.7	10.3	10.3	8.7	7.4	4.3	2.7	55.6
1959									4.3	9.4	10.2	9.3	8.5	6.3	6.1	54.1
1960										3.9	11.1	10.2	10.6	6.8	4.6	47.8
1961											5.4	13.2	12.3	10.0	6.0	46.8
1962												5.1	16.8	14.6	8.2	44.7
1963													6.9	16.2	9.9	33.1
1964														9.3	16.0	25.3
1965															10.5	10.5

Source: M.H.L.G., 1967.

Note: Each cohort = 100% on arrival; figures give the percentage of the cohort leaving each year.

very considerable importance in relation to turnover because, prior to the introduction of "fair rent" legislation (by the 1972 Housing Finance Act), there was a large difference in rents between Peterlee and the villages. Peterlee rents, although subsidised by Central Government, were nearly double those charged to tenants of Council housing in the villages because the R.D.C. was able - unlike the Corporation - to "pool" rents, subsidising new stock by older, pre-war stock. The high level of Peterlee rents resulted in financial hardship for many tenants, particularly in the 1950s,⁽¹⁾ and many sought - and some succeeded - to obtain a Council house in the villages. In the case of miners, eligible for a rent-free house, a large number left Peterlee when their turn came to be allocated a colliery house. Some waited until they were able to buy a house although, as informants have pointed out, it was often easier to move to a colliery house and save the deposit to buy a house rather than remain in Peterlee where rents were so high that saving was impossible. Certainly, it is clear that the rent differential, an anomaly only recently removed, helped to generate high turnover and that for some tenants a rent increase precipitated a definite decision to move away.

The continuing significance of the short-term resident is also demonstrated by duration data for the period after 1965 (Table 3.6 - tabulated on a different basis from the cohort data and thus not directly comparable with Table 3.5). In 1966 nearly 65% of those terminating their tenancies had stayed for less than three years and in 1975 the proportion was still as high as 55%. Evidently, the first few months and years define a critical period for newcomers.

(1) The relatively high cost of living in Peterlee and its social consequences are considered in chapter V below. Apparently the rent differential diminished to some extent as the stock of housing increased and, by pooling arrangements, houses built in the 1960s were "subsidised" by those built in the 1950s (at lower cost and interest rates).

This is the period during which they succeed or fail to "settle in". On the other hand it may mark the length of time it takes for those who never intended to stay more than temporarily to find a house and/or job elsewhere.

Table 3.6 Terminating Households by Length of Stay

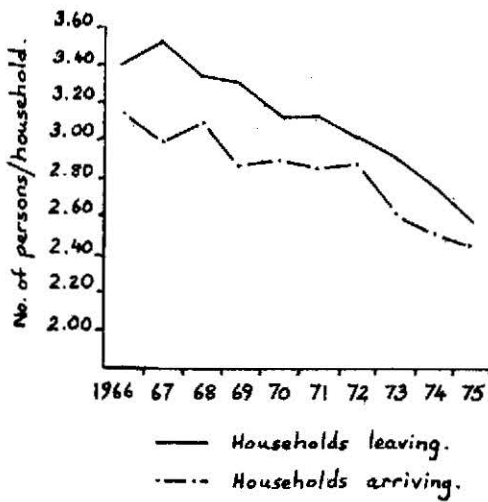
Year	Percentage of tenancies terminated during year of given duration				
	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4 years or more
1966	23.7	24.5	16.4	9.2	26.1
1967	18.3	21.2	18.0	11.9	30.6
1968	22.1	15.4	16.4	10.9	35.1
1969	23.8	17.0	10.4	12.5	36.3
1970	28.5	19.9	12.1	7.8	31.7
1971	33.3	21.1	11.0	5.8	28.8
1972	30.1	23.1	13.5	7.0	26.3
1973	21.6	24.5	19.1	6.9	27.9
1974	10.3	21.3	20.9	12.4	35.1
1975	18.9	17.5	18.7	11.4	33.5

Source: DOE New Towns Records, Table (T) 9B
(Rows sum to 100%)

c) Characteristics of emigrant households

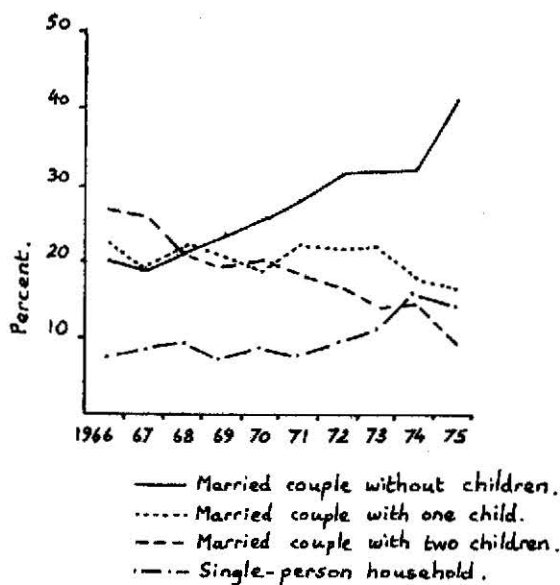
At least since 1966, the average size of households leaving Peterlee in a given year has been greater than the households which have replaced them (Fig. 3.13). This is partly accounted for by a time-lag such that those households leaving in a particular year were of similar average size to those taking up tenancies two or three years earlier. Some families will, of course, add children while they are living in Peterlee and this helps to explain some of the differences in household composition between those leaving (Fig. 3.14) and the intake of new tenants (Fig. 3.8). The net effect of these movements is the continual rejuvenation of the population

Fig. 3.13 Average size of emigrant households.



Source: D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Tables (T)4A and (NR)5A.

Fig. 3.14 Composition of emigrant households.

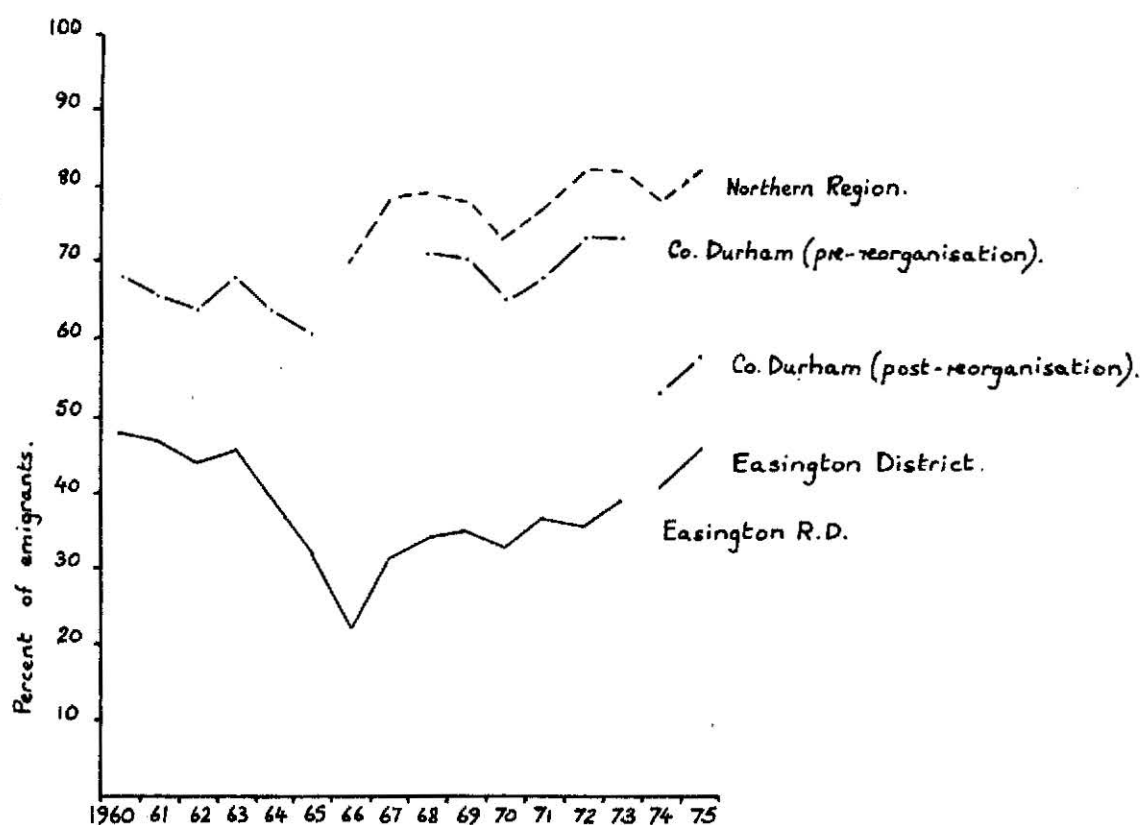


Source: D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (T)6A.

as young childless couples replace older families with children. This is further emphasised by the fact that Peterlee has increasingly restricted its intake to newly-married second-generation couples.

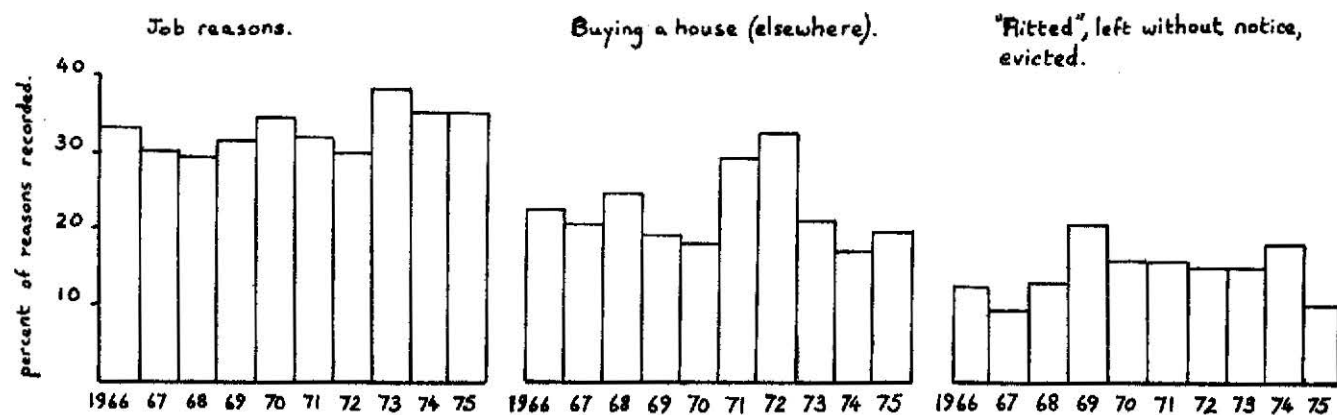
Data on the destinations of emigrants for the period 1960-75 (Fig. 3.15) show a localised pattern, with 60%-70% moving to places within the pre-1974 County Durham. The proportion of emigrants moving to the surrounding villages has varied widely - from 20% in the mid-1960s to nearly 50% in 1975. To some extent these data reflect the characteristics of the intake, again with a time-lag element. Thus it may be argued that the low proportion moving to the villages in the mid-1960s is related to the influx of outsiders in the early 1960s. The proportion going to places outside the region is similar to the corresponding proportion of the intake. Finally, these data can be used to illustrate the loss of population from the villages to Peterlee in recent years. The records show that between 1966 and 1975, 3,439 families (households) left the villages and came to live in Peterlee but only 1,864 moved in the reverse direction. This, however, represents only the most visible part of the population loss; the restructuring of housing opportunities has diverted migration to Peterlee and the loss of young couples to the New Town has exacerbated the decline of the villages, turning some of them into almost moribund communities of retired miners. On the other hand, the continued movement of people back to the villages may be regarded as clear evidence that the villages - despite their shortcomings - continue to be attractive to a large number of Peterlee's residents, for a wide variety of economic, social and cultural reasons. For those who return to the much maligned pit villages, there can be little truth in the Corporation's publicity slogan which declares that "Peterlee is the Place to Be".

Fig. 3.15 Destinations of emigrant households.



Sources: Reports of Chief Housing Officer, P.D.C.
D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (T) 4A.

Fig. 3.16 Emigrants' reasons for leaving.



Source: D.O.E. New Towns Records, Peterlee; Table (T) 13A.

d) Reasons for leaving Peterlee

The D.O.E. records include "reasons for leaving" as given by emigrant tenants. There are serious drawbacks with these data - only one pre-coded reason is recorded and the information is collected by Corporation officials - nevertheless, we reproduce the figures here, showing the relative importance of the three main "reasons" given, which together account for about 70% of the total (Fig. 3.16).

It is not surprising to find that job reasons are pre-eminent, given the context of high unemployment, redundancies and limited opportunities. Whilst employment is not often given as a reason for coming to Peterlee, it is frequently given as a reason for leaving the town. It appears that this factor has become more important recently, perhaps reflecting the increasing level of local unemployment and possibly transfers of miners following the closure of nearby Shotton Colliery in 1972 (since some of the Shotton miners lived in Peterlee).

Buying a house outside Peterlee accounts for the decision to move in many instances - between one-fifth and one-third of emigrants gave this reason. It should be borne in mind that, during the period 1970-4, those leaving to become owner-occupiers were not only "voting with their feet" against the practice of renting but had also decided not to buy their Corporation house, which at that time could be purchased at a price reduced by a discount of up to 20% (off the "market" value). Several informants pointed out that they had rejected the idea of buying their Corporation houses because they had reservations about the quality of the building and/or anticipated that it might prove difficult to sell in the future (see also section 5 below). It is estimated that between 1970 and 1974 more than twice as many people left to buy houses elsewhere than stayed

to buy as sitting tenants in Peterlee⁽¹⁾ - despite the discount and the Corporation's help in arranging mortgages.

A third "reason", recorded by Housing Department officials in the tenants' absence, is given under the general heading of "flitting"/left without notice/evicted. It is believed that few of the cases were, in fact, evictions; the Corporation, in common with other landlords, finds difficulty in securing eviction orders through the courts and is reluctant to become involved in these cumbersome procedures. It is more usual for tenants with rent arrears to respond to threats of court action by "flitting" - moving out without informing the Corporation.

But both house purchase and "flitting" can be related back to the problem of Peterlee's relatively high rents. Indeed, this was the view taken by the Corporation in a report prepared in 1970 which considered the causes of high turnover in some detail.⁽²⁾ There it was argued that flitting and evictions, which had in the previous year accounted for about 20% of emigrants, were almost entirely due to difficulties in paying rent. But it was thought "fair to assume that the rent of the tenanted property must also have been a factor which influenced a large number of those who left the town to purchase their own property $\frac{18\%}{7}$ whilst, to a lesser degree, the same reason could apply to a number of those who gave 'domestic reasons' as their reason for leaving $\frac{4\%}{7}$ and to those who gave no reason at all $\frac{8\%}{7}$ ". In support of this contention it was said to be "significant" that turnover on the newest estates with the highest rents was far greater than on the older, lower-rent estates.

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- (1) This estimate is based on the number of those who said that their main reason for leaving was to buy a house. No doubt many others, especially those leaving for employment, subsequently bought a house elsewhere.
- (2) Report produced by the Corporation's Chief Housing Officer: Social Aspects of House Lettings, Jan. 1970, 3pp. (P.D.C. File AR4).

If this analysis is correct then it seems probable that the recent reduction in turnover may largely be the result of the removal of the rent differential between Peterlee's Corporation houses and Council houses (both in the villages and elsewhere) in 1974. It would appear reasonable to argue that inflated house prices (prices increased dramatically after 1970) further dissuaded those who may have considered moving from doing so. The Corporation, however, maintains that the decrease in the turnover rate

"would indicate increasing stability in the New Town's population and, from the very large number of applications which continue to be received from the surrounding area, that Peterlee is becoming increasingly accepted as a desirable place to live in." (1)

Our discussion takes up this assertion and now attempts to determine the extent to which Peterlee's population is, in fact, geographically stable.

e) Residents' attachment to Peterlee

In the 1974 NEAS Survey respondents (both tenants and owner-occupiers) were asked a number of questions which concerned the degree to which they were "attached" to Peterlee.

Firstly, the question was raised: "Do you now think of Peterlee as your real home or just a place to live?" 66% of respondents answered "real home" while the rest, 34%, thought of Peterlee merely as "a place to live".⁽²⁾ Over half of the latter group considered their "real home" to be one of the surrounding villages. A hypothetical question on how respondents would feel if they had to leave Peterlee suggested strong attachment felt by more than half

(1) Peterlee Development Corporation, Annual Report, 1974.

(2) In the 1973 NEAS Survey on "Sense of Place and Local Identity" a similar question was asked of residents in old-established "traditional" towns in the North-East. 79% of respondents in that survey thought of their town as their "real home" (Townsend and Taylor, 1974).

of those answering the question (Table 3.7). A minority, 14.5%, said that they would be pleased or very pleased to leave Peterlee, but a sizeable proportion declared their indifference.

Table 3.7: Attitudes to moving.

Question: "If you had to leave Peterlee now, how would you feel?"

	No.	%	
Very sorry	39	20.2)	57%
Sorry	71	36.8)	
Indifferent	55	28.5	
Pleased	11	5.7)	14.5%
Very pleased	17	8.8)	
Totals	193	100	

Source: 1974 NEAS Survey.

An attempt was made to establish further the relative size of the attached and relatively unattached groups by analysing these two questions together with a further question: "Do most of your friends live in Peterlee?". By cross-tabulating all three sets of answers together, it was possible to gauge the size of the groups at each end of the attachment spectrum (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Composite measure of strength of attachment to Peterlee
Relatively settled - strong attachment

- 1) "Real home"/sorry or v. sorry to leave/friends here = 30% of all respondents.
- 2) "Real home/sorry or v. sorry to leave/friends not here = 23% of all respondents.

Unsettled - weak attachment

- 3) "Place to live"/indifferent, pleased or v. pleased to leave/friends not here = 20% of all respondents.
- 4) "Place to live"/pleased or v. pleased to leave/friends not here = 8% of all respondents.

(note that (4) is a subset of (3))

Source: 1974 NEAS Survey (questions given in text).

Although only a small minority (8%) might be thought of as very likely - or even anxious - to move away as many as one-fifth have only a weak attachment to Peterlee and might, in certain circumstances, leave the town. In fact, an earlier question in the survey⁽¹⁾ yielded the finding that about 12% of respondents thought themselves "certain" or "likely" to leave Peterlee "in the next year or so".

Shortly after the NEAS Survey, the Corporation sent out a postal questionnaire to a sample of its tenants in order to ascertain their preferences. This was undertaken in connection with an attempt to develop long-term housing policies in conjunction with Easington District Council. Although the response rate was very low (only 36%) the findings are of some interest, showing that 79% of respondents were content to remain in Peterlee but 21% would prefer to live in one of the surrounding villages if suitable housing were available.⁽²⁾ This would appear to confirm our overall impression that, while the majority are reasonably settled in Peterlee, a significant minority - perhaps as many as 1000 households - are unsettled.

Finally, the NEAS Survey posed a question, the answers to which are perhaps rather difficult to interpret: "Do you expect to spend the rest of your life in Peterlee?" 54% envisaged remaining in Peterlee, 27% gave a definite "no" and 18% were unsure. As might be expected, there was a strong correlation (χ^2 significant @ 99%) with age; young people regarded themselves as much more likely to move than did older people. One general conclusion which may be drawn from this and other findings is that modern expectations and

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- (1) Question 13, which asked "how likely are you to move from this address in the next year or so?" Of the 199 respondents, 38 expected to move house; 14 of them expected to remain in Peterlee while the rest anticipated leaving the town.
- (2) These findings were given in Appendix H of the Chief Executive's Report to the Easington Housing Working Party, dated 19.7.74.

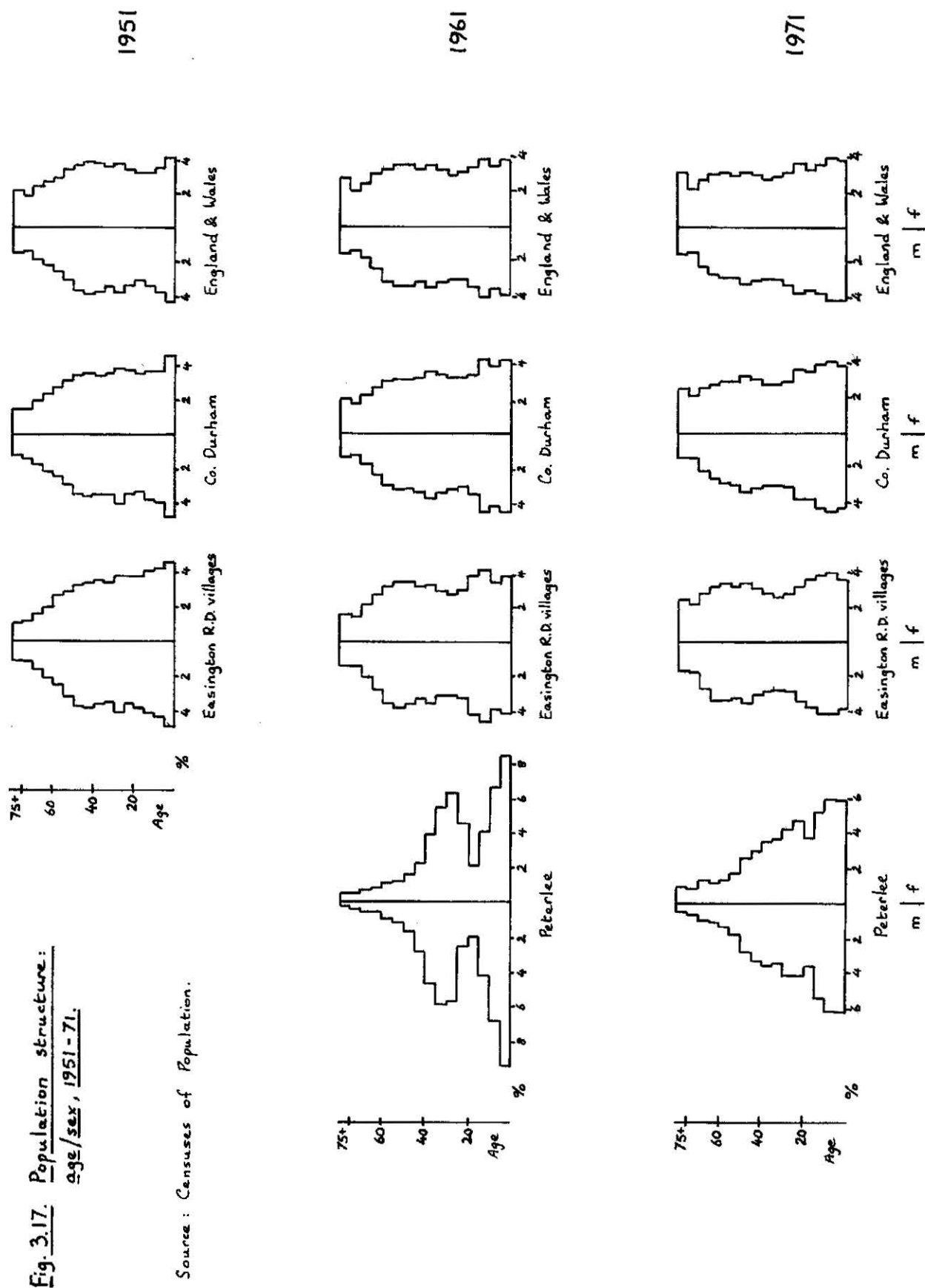
opportunities for mobility greatly differ from those of the past; the insularity of the area has been considerably reduced - and the New Town itself has helped to bring modern mass values and aspirations to the area.

3.4 Population structure: age and socio-economic composition

To complete this part of the account, we provide a brief discussion of two further demographic features: age and socio-economic composition. Both of these highly important aspects are analysed via census comparisons rather than the migration statistics, owing to serious inadequacies in the way in which these factors are dealt with in the migration records. The census data also have the advantage of including all the population (and all tenures).

The age/sex population pyramids in Fig. 3.17 show, very clearly, that Peterlee has a youthful population which sets it apart from the mature populations of the sub-region, the County and England and Wales. This was particularly marked in 1961, when Peterlee contained a very high proportion of young adults with young children. At that time only 17.2% of Peterlee's population was aged 40 and over, compared with 44.2% for England and Wales.

By 1971, although Peterlee's population was still very youthful relative to the other areas shown, some of the gross irregularities had been reduced - in particular the excessive proportion of pre-school children had decreased and a significant growth in the teenage population had occurred. However, one-quarter of the population was under 10 years of age, compared with about one-sixth in the other distributions and the 15-19 age group was still represented by a discontinuity in the pyramid. The latter feature may partly be caused by outmigration, especially by young men.



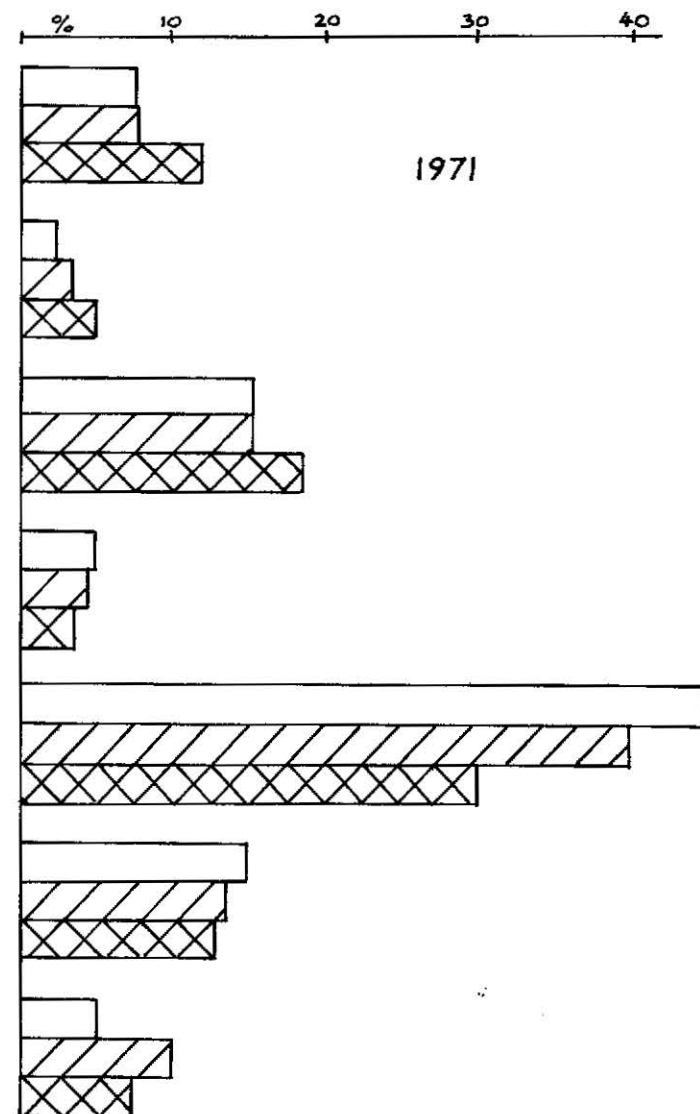
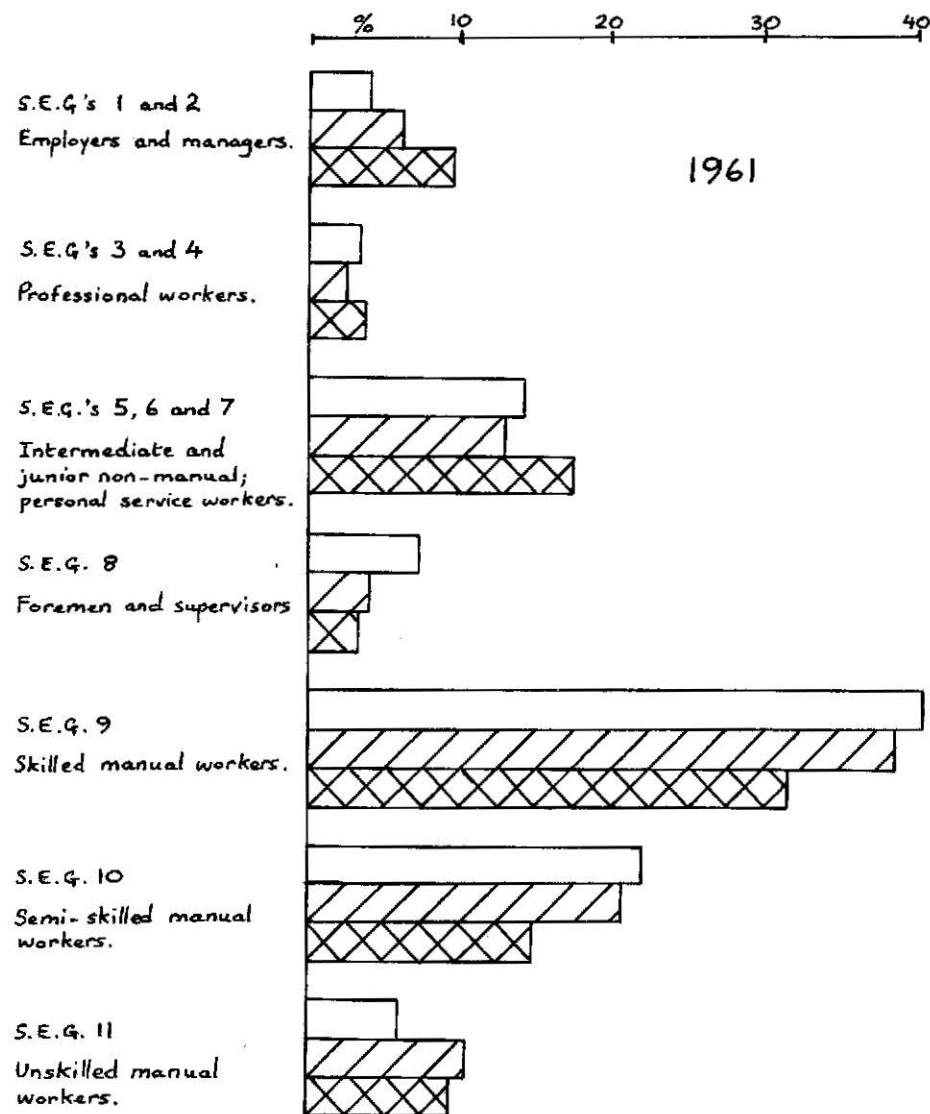
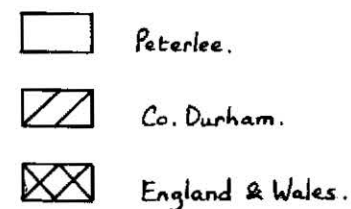


Fig. 3.18 Socio-Economic Groups of economically active males; selected areas, 1961 and 1971.

Sources: Censuses of Population
(S.E.G.'s 12-17 excluded).



The impact of emigration from the villages - especially by young people - can be appreciated by comparing their 1951, 1961 and 1971 age/sex structures. During the 1950s the structure changed from one which was youthful (a reflection, not least, of the relatively short life-expectancy of miners) to one which contained an over-representation of the middle-aged and a deficiency of young adults and young children, when compared with the County as a whole. The 1960s witnessed the continuation of this ageing process such that by 1971 in almost every age group above 50, the villages recorded higher proportions than both the County and England and Wales. The increasingly tightened "waist" of the "pyramid" points to the progressive loss of young people from the villages. Migration to Peterlee is undoubtedly the major factor responsible for these trends but the transfer of miners - and mainly younger miners - to other areas following local colliery closures was also an important influence on the population structure.

Fig. 3.18 shows the percentage of economically active males within the various Socio-Economic Groups (S.E.G.'s) - as defined by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys - for 1961 and 1971. Here a comparison is made between Peterlee, County Durham and England and Wales.

In each of the broad categories selected, with the notable exception of unskilled manual workers, Peterlee conforms more closely to the County than to England and Wales. Unskilled manual workers represent a small - and diminishing - minority of Peterlee men; in 1971 this group accounted for only about 5% of economically active males in Peterlee, compared with almost 8% for England and Wales and 10% in County Durham.

In fact, the overwhelming dominance of skilled manual workers - 45% in Peterlee compared with 30% in England and Wales - together with the semi-skilled (15% of Peterlee males), leaves little room for those at either end of the socio-economic spectrum. Not only are unskilled workers under-represented, so too are employers and managers; but in the case of the latter Peterlee had at least achieved a similar proportion to the County by 1971. New Towns have always had difficulty in attracting managerial and professional workers and, in 1971, only six New Towns - all in the "London Ring" - recorded a proportion of these groups (S.E.G.'s 1 to 4) which was above the national average. But of all the New Towns, only Skelmersdale and Runcorn had lower proportions of these groups than did Peterlee in 1971.

A further comparison with other New Towns reveals that Peterlee had the highest proportion of skilled and semi-skilled manual workers (taking S.E.G.'s 9 and 10 together) and that only the "London Ring" New Towns had smaller proportions of unskilled manual workers than Peterlee. The main factors accounting for this pattern are allocation policies and employment opportunities. A large number of those who have moved to Peterlee are young, skilled men employed both in traditional and modern industries - mining and engineering, in particular - where skills are required. To an extent, it seems that the town also attracts the more ambitious - the "affluent" (skilled) worker seeking better housing conditions. Peterlee's high rents have reinforced this; even in the early years, according to some informants, it tended to be the higher-paid, skilled, faceworker at the pit who moved to Peterlee whilst the unskilled datal worker found the high rents prevented him from doing so. The census figures do, however, conceal the fact that over 7% of the men classed as "economically active" were actually unemployed at the time and, as we argue in chapter IV below - many of these men had redundant skills which the labour market no longer required.

To conclude, the general point which emerges is that Peterlee has successfully assembled a young and predominantly skilled male labour force. The question which has to be tackled in the next chapter is: why, then, has Peterlee experienced so much difficulty in attracting male-employing industrial development?

4. The geography of housing

4.1 Spatial variations within Peterlee

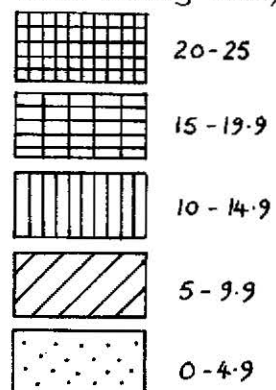
Having described population movements at an aggregate level, we now consider some aspects of the internal geography of Peterlee. It is argued that variations within Peterlee of housing type, age, quality and tenure are paralleled by, and correlated with, differences in the status and characteristics of areas and their residents. Data presented here serve as evidence that the idealistic hopes of Silkin and others that classes and groups would not be segregated in the New Towns have clearly not been realized in Peterlee.

Figs. 3.19 to 3.24 plot a number of census variables at Enumeration District (E.D.) level for 1971. In very general terms, these maps indicate that the main differences occurring within Peterlee are those between the western and eastern sections of the town. Referring back to our earlier discussion of the build-up of Peterlee (section 2.1 above) it will be seen that the distinction very roughly corresponds to the chronology of development (c.f. Fig. 3.3). This, in turn, is reflected by architectural differences between "traditional" and "non-traditional" housing. Enclaves of privately-built owner-occupied housing produce a secondary source of variation, identifiable at E.D. level.

Even a cursory examination of these census maps demonstrates the striking contrasts within Peterlee between pockets of relative affluence and deprivation. Parts of the Edenhill area provide clear evidence of the multiple nature of deprivation. The two measures of economic "welfare", unemployment (Fig. 3.19) and car ownership (Fig. 3.20), show the high concentration of unemployment and low car ownership in this area. Two E.D.'s in Edenhill experienced levels of male unemployment three times greater than the average for Peterlee as a whole and four of the six E.D.'s with unemployment rates of more than 10% were in Edenhill. Similarly, seven of the

Fig. 3.19 Economically active males seeking work; Peterlee 1971.

Percentage of economically active males seeking work, Peterlee: 1971.



(All Peterlee: 7.83%)

Names refer to Peterlee wards.

Source: 1971 Census data mapped at Enumeration District level.
(Non-residential parts of E.D.'s left blank).

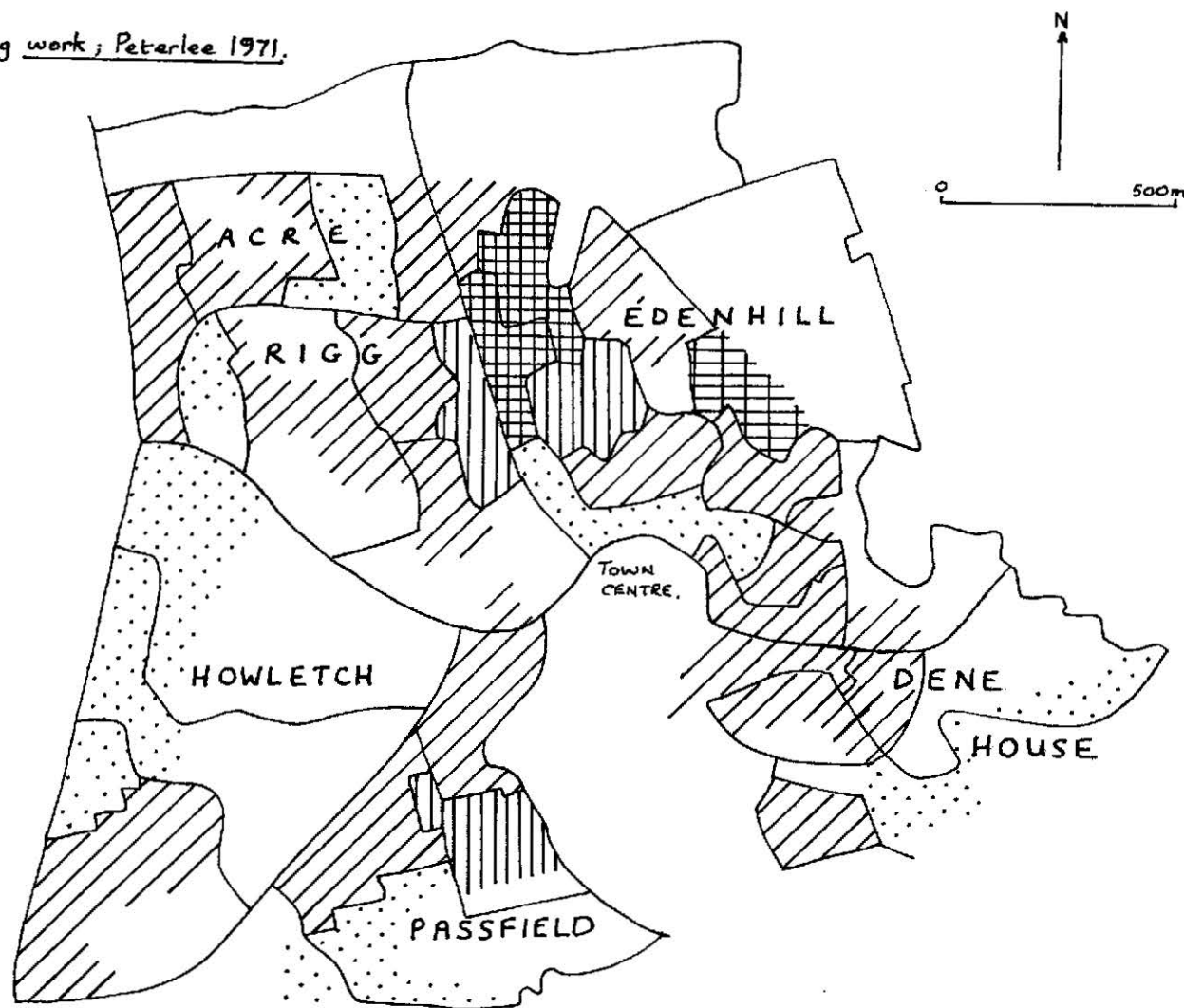
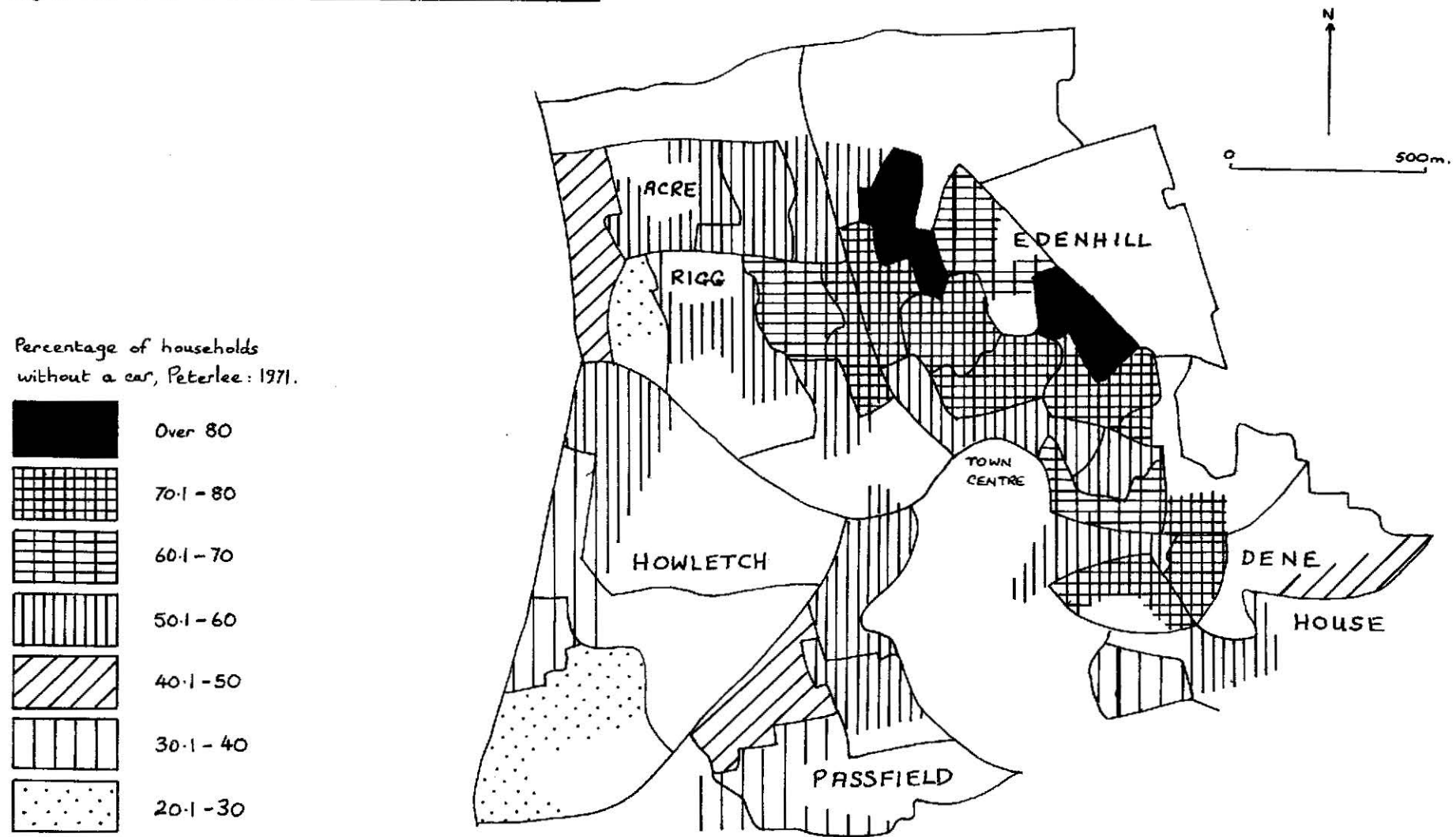
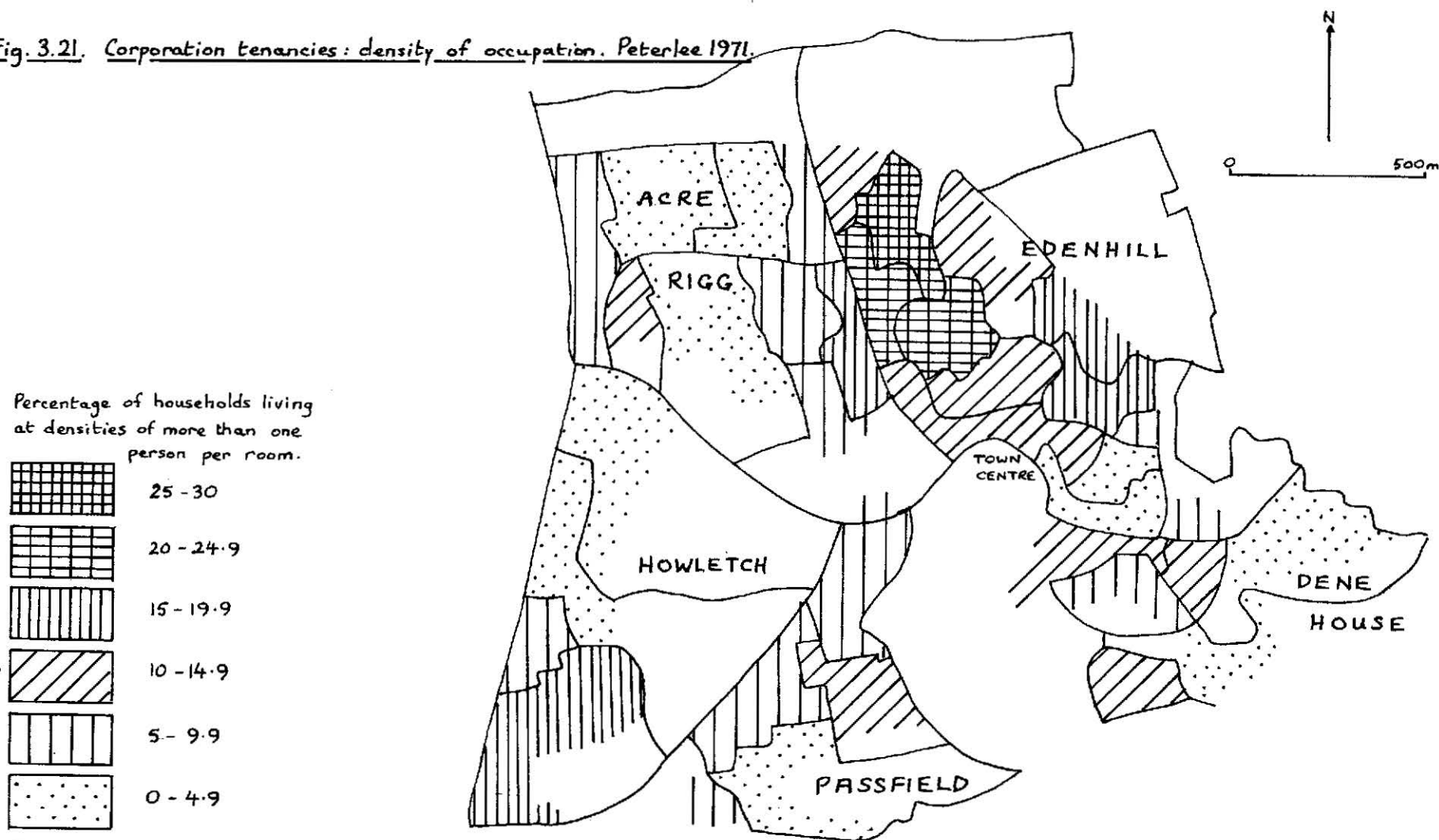


Fig. 3.20 Peterlee households without a car, 1971.



Source: 1971 Census data mapped at Enumeration District level.
(Non-residential parts of E.D.'s left blank).

Fig. 3.21. Corporation tenancies: density of occupation. Peterlee 1971.

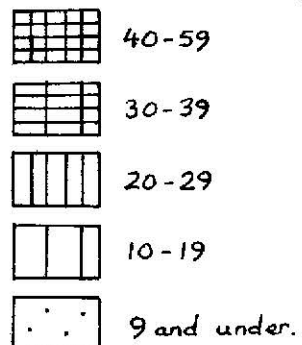


CORPORATION TENANCIES ONLY.

Source: 1971 Census data mapped at Enumeration District level.

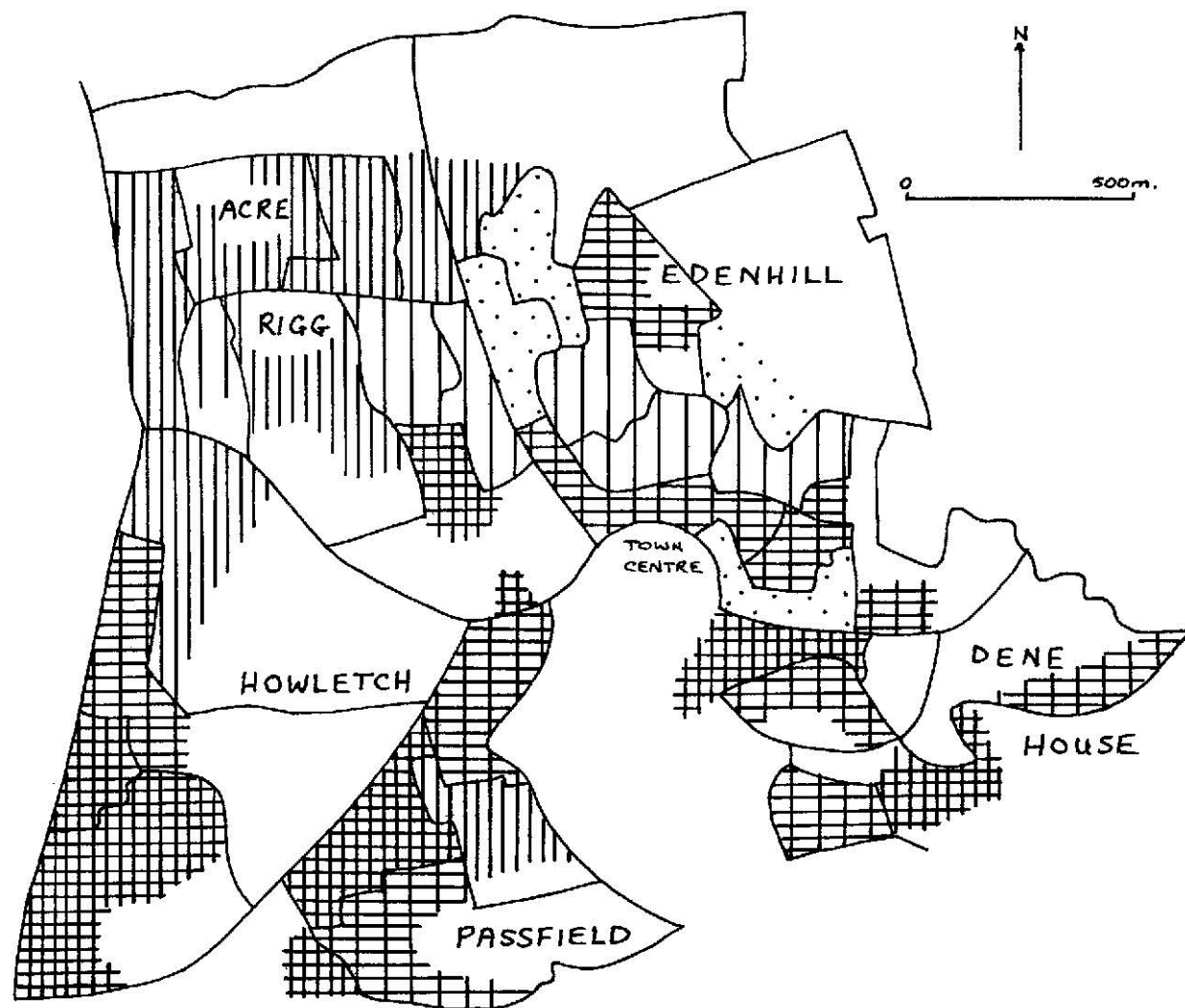
(Non-residential parts of E.D.'s left blank).

Percentage of heads of households
in non-manual occupations.

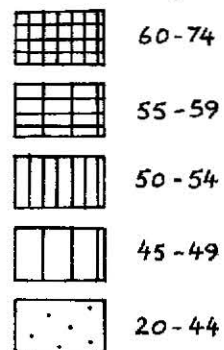


Source: 1971 Census data
(10% sample) mapped at
Enumeration District level.
(Non-residential parts of E.D.'s left blank).

Fig. 3.22. Heads of households in non-manual occupations; Peterlee 1971.



Percentage of heads of households
in skilled and semi-skilled
manual occupations.



Source: 1971 Census data
(10% sample) mapped at
Enumeration District level.
(Non-residential parts of E.D.'s left blank).

Fig. 3.23. Heads of households in skilled and semi-skilled
manual occupations; Peterlee 1971.

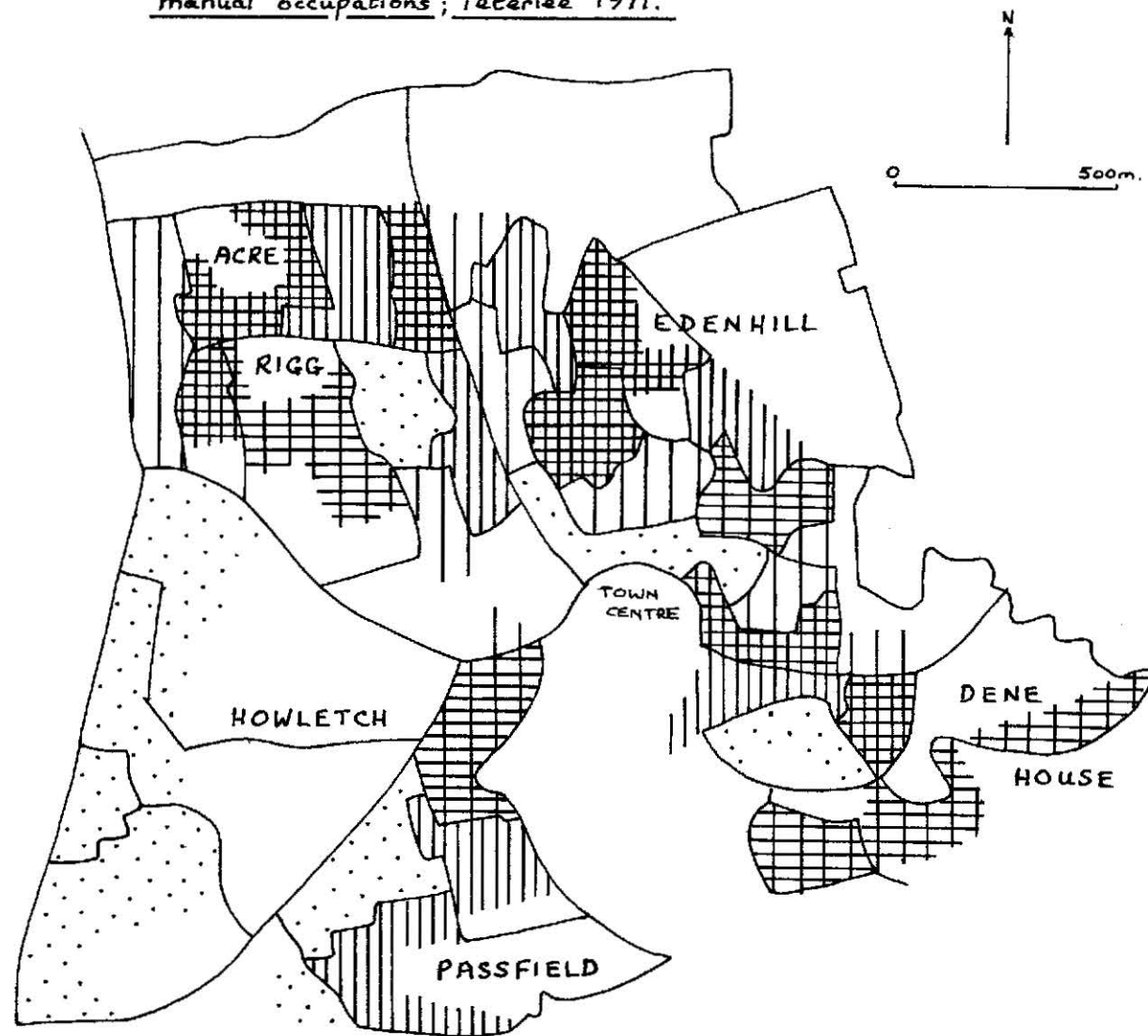
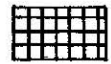
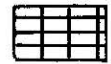


Fig.3.24. Heads of households in unskilled manual occupations; Peterlee 1971.

Percentage of heads of households in
unskilled manual occupations.



30-49



20-29



10-19

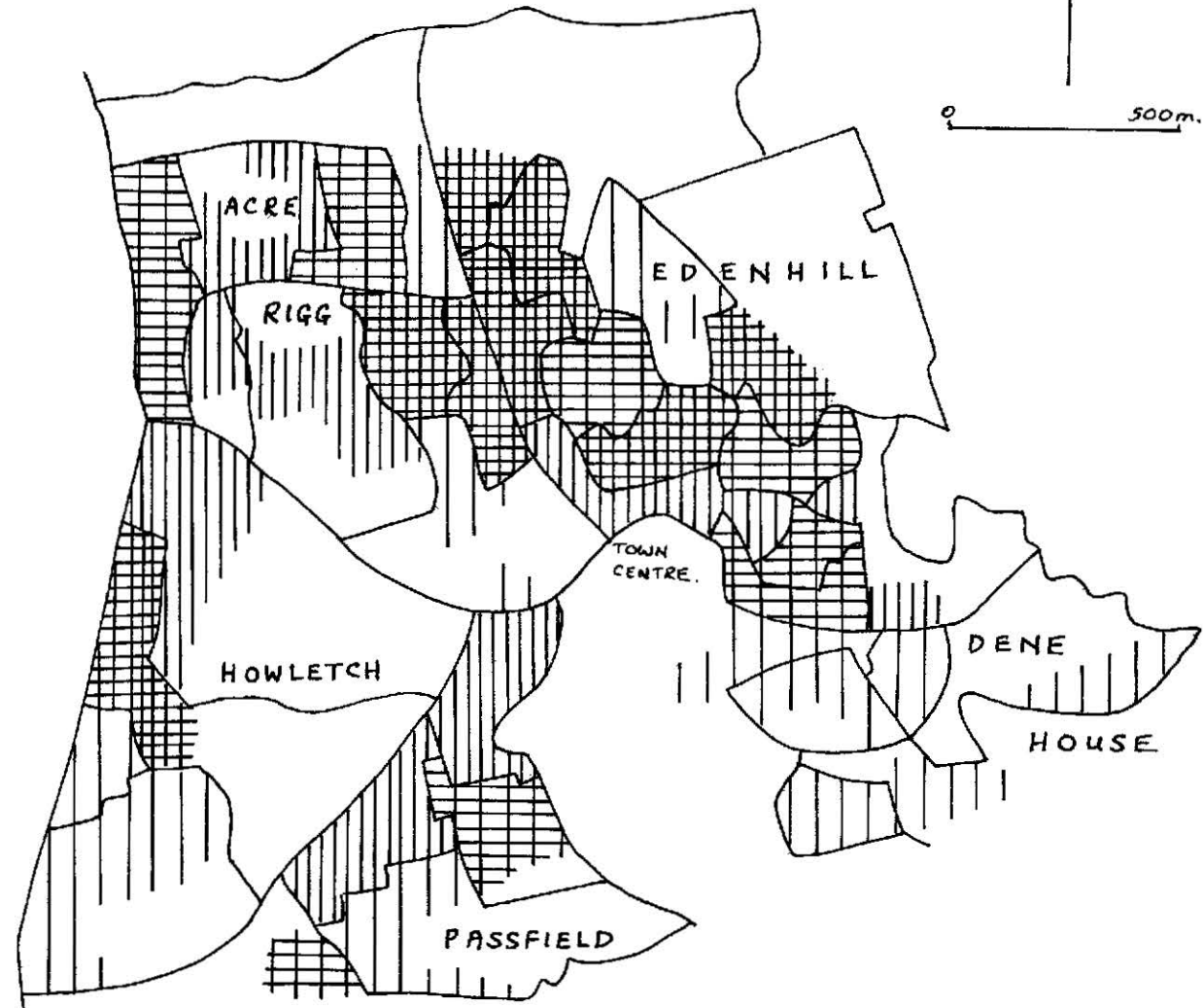


9 and under.

Source: 1971 Census data

(10% sample) mapped at
Enumeration District level.

(Non-residential parts of E.D.'s left blank).



ten E.D.'s in which more than 70% of households did not have a car, were in Edenhill. Overcrowding (Fig. 3.21) provides another source of deprivation in the same area.

Data on socio-economic groups, divided very broadly into non-manual, skilled - and semi-skilled manual, and unskilled manual heads of household (Figs. 3.22 to 3.24), also demonstrate the magnitude of variations within the town.⁽¹⁾ Some areas, for instance, contain a proportion of non-manual heads of household five times greater than do other areas. E.D.'s which include private estates (e.g. Old Shotton, East Dene) record some of the highest levels in this respect whilst Edenhill has the four E.D.'s with the lowest proportions. It is not surprising to find that unskilled manual workers are heavily concentrated in Edenhill; skilled - and semi-skilled heads of household are, however, rather more dispersed. These maps do not, perhaps, justify the making of a simple west-east distinction (nor do S.E.G.'s relate directly with economic variables) but they are useful in showing that occupational and social groups are by no means intermixed in Peterlee.

A major part of the explanation for these patterns, at least as far as the Corporation-rented sector is concerned, is to be found in the Corporation's allocation policies and practices.

Firstly, it appears that the socio-economic character of the different estates broadly reflects the composition of the intake during the period in which they were built and allocated, despite population movements in subsequent years. Thus the NEAS survey

(1) Note that these data are susceptible to large sampling errors because they are 10% samples of very small areas. It should be noted also that they refer to S.E.G.'s of Heads of Household and therefore are not comparable with data given in Fig. 3.18, based on all economically active males.

revealed that the earlier estates contain high proportions of people from the surrounding villages and the newest estate, Howletch, has a large majority of people who came from further afield - reflecting the fact that many "outsiders" came to Peterlee in the 1960s and early 1970s when this estate was developed.⁽¹⁾ In very general terms, the local intake largely comprised manual workers employed in low-paid local industries whilst the "outsiders" included key workers and many in non-manual occupations, including teaching. A further, related factor is the difference in cost between the older and the newer housing, both in terms of rent and running costs. The rents of the newer houses, built to Parker-Morris standards, are higher and many possess central heating, whilst most of the 1950s houses had (until very recently) open coal-fires. It can be argued⁽²⁾ that the older estates are thus more suited to the lower-paid and, indeed, the "traditional" tenant; these areas also have the advantage of proximity to the coastal villages and, unlike Howletch, are not modelled on the principle of the strung-out suburb where a car is almost essential. However, it would be incorrect to suggest that the character of the different areas has simply resulted from variations in demand and the satisfaction of applicants' preferences. It appears, in fact, that the Corporation has operated allocation policies which have reinforced and maintained Peterlee's socio-economic geography. It is understood, for example, that the local second-generation applicant is most likely to be allocated an older house whilst the key worker, in a strong bargaining position, may well be offered a new house in the Howletch area.

(1) The percentages of immigrants in each ward who were living in Easington District prior to moving to Peterlee were as follows: Edenhill, 70%; Dene House, 69%; Acre Rigg, 59%; Passfield, 54%; Howletch, 30%.

(2) This line of argument was, in fact, put forward by a Corporation officer (not, however, employed in the Housing Department).

Certainly, rents, incomes, preferences and so on do enter the process but so too do allocation policies.

The way in which small area differences are produced, managed and maintained is also shown through the methods by which transfers take place. The transfer of a tenancy from one Corporation house to another is by no means uncommon; the 1974 NEAS Survey found that 45% of respondents had moved within Peterlee by transfer and one-third of these had made such a move more than once. It is of interest to note that, although many had transferred because they had wanted a larger house or had found it necessary to move for health reasons, some 35% said that they moved primarily because they had disliked the area in which they were living and preferred the area in which their present house was situated.

In the past, transfers were more easy to obtain and more common than at present. During the 1960s, when there was a housing surplus, it was relatively easy to transfer to another house and many people moved to new estates when they were completed. But since 1972-3, when a shortage of houses began to be felt and the Corporation had reduced its rate of building, transfers have become difficult to obtain and must usually involve a mutual transfer arrangement between tenants.⁽¹⁾ In all circumstances, however, transfers must be approved by the Corporation and conform to several more or less formal rules. The Corporation generally does not consider transfers unless the tenant has lived in Peterlee for at least two years. Tenants with rent arrears are not considered and "transfers are not normally granted if they would result in an increased rent rebate".⁽²⁾ Such rules tend to maintain areas of deprivation and

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- (1) Advertisements for mutual exchange "partners" regularly appear in "Peterlee Scene", a monthly news-sheet produced in association with the Corporation. All such requests are formally prefixed with the phrase "subject to the approval of Peterlee Development Corporation".
- (2) Housing Policy in Peterlee: a report by the Corporation's Acting Chief Estates Officer, 9.8.73, para. 4.4.

stress, as does the mutual transfer system. This is shown by information given in the NEAS survey by those who had transferred: in Edenhill some 71% of those who had moved had previously lived in another part of the same ward. In Acre Rigg, Passfield and Dene House about half had moved within the same ward whereas in Howlatch only 25% had done so. The system thus seems to block transfers out of Edenhill.

The census maps show quite clearly that there are significant differences between parts of Peterlee and, given that the Corporation has near-total control of housing, the strong suspicion that there is a definite link with formal Corporation allocation policies is justified. But evidence is difficult to find since most decisions are taken on a day-to-day ad hoc basis by officials. It is clear that the Corporation labels some tenants as "problem tenants", as shown by the following statements:

"In the past the town has received an apparently large number of problem tenants referred by social and voluntary services but seldom have these services provided any follow-up or after-care service or interest. Current policies are to adopt a harder line in view of both the shortage of housing and the proportion of problem tenants and tenants with rent arrears (there is not necessarily any correlation between these groups)." (1)

Similarly:

"A problem with some of the older areas, and with others, is that they contain a high proportion of "bad" tenants." (2)

The Corporation recognises (but does not publicly admit) that there are "good" and "bad" areas and evidence of the link between this recognition and allocation policy is provided by an instance in which an allocation was discussed in detail by the internal Housing Committee. On this occasion a "special case" was considered and an unusually specific recommendation noted in the minutes: that accommodation be offered "in a good area of the town". (3) The

(1) Ibid., para. 4.4

(2) Ibid., para. 8.7

(3) Corporation Housing Committee, minutes, 10.5.74, p.8.

applicant had been visited and judged: "Corporation Housing Officers have been impressed by the quality of the applicant and her family and feel that given the opportunity /they/ would be good tenants" (my emphases).

But while the processes are not easy to pin down, the results - "bad areas" - can be plainly seen. Although the NEAS Survey found little agreement as to which was "the best area" in Peterlee - some cited parts of Dene House, the South-West Area (Passfield) and Howlatch - there was an overwhelming, if not alarming, consensus on the "worst part" in which to live. 125 out of 185 respondents pointed to a part of the Edenhill estate - not surprisingly the section of the estate included in the census E.D.'s with the greatest degree of deprivation.⁽¹⁾ This area is certainly neglected and several people justified their choice by reference to its dirty or "slummy" appearance, but others referred to its "bad tenants" or remarked that "all the criminals and scroungers live there".

It is clear, then, that not only do the residents of this area suffer a variety of deprivations; they are also labelled by the Corporation and stigmatised by the rest of the population. Interviews with residents in this area⁽²⁾ revealed that this stigma was keenly felt, it was resented and was very often unjustified. However, as several people pointed out, it was impossible to obtain a transfer out of the area because of the Corporation's policies - particularly with regard to rent rebates - and, most of all, because the area was so well known to be "bad" that no-one would consider moving there by mutual exchange.

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- (1) 85 said the "Royal Arms" area, 20 said Smith Crescent and 7 gave Fairbairn Road - all parts of the most deprived section of Edenhill Estate, as identified by the census.
- (2) Residents living in one of the most notorious streets in this area were interviewed by the author in July 1977 in connection with an ongoing research project in the Sociology Dept., University of Durham.

At the other end of the spectrum, "class distinction" - as the Reith Committee apologetically called it - has been reinforced by the Corporation's planning policies. As early as 1957 the Corporation Board pointed to the "necessity to provide as great a degree of segregation as possible"⁽¹⁾ between Corporation estates and sites for private housing since it was thought that this would offer the most attractive proposition to private builders. Consequently, most of Peterlee's private estates are indeed private, insulated from Corporation development by trees, walls and fences and they are located on prime sites. Heraud (1968, p.54) has said that the initial idealism and reformism associated with the New Towns has been replaced by an ideology "which accepted and adapted to what was believed to be the middle-class desire for social segregation". But at Peterlee and elsewhere it is doubtful whether Corporations seriously considered mixing tenures and types of house in order to achieve what the Reith Committee had hoped for. Operating in an environment in which "class distinction" and inequality are deep-rooted characteristic features, the Corporations did not and - given their commercial context - perhaps could not, risk such experiments. Indeed, they have done much to maintain the status quo. Thus Schaffer, a former secretary of the New Towns Association (a body representing the Corporations) was recently able to remark that

"It is no part of the job of the Development Corporations to change the pattern of British life - indeed, to be successful both financially and socially they must accommodate it. If the towns have, as some put it, developed their 'snob areas'... it is because that's the way people want it."

(Schaffer, 1972, pp. 184-5)

It is certainly evident that at Peterlee inequalities have been perpetuated - even reinforced and planned for - and that housing policies have played a vital part in enabling and encouraging this to take place.

(1) P.D.C. Board minutes, June 1957.

4.2 Housing opportunities within the sub-region

A comparison between figures from the 1971 census and some of the findings of the 1948 Easington Social Survey (Table 3.9) demonstrates that considerable improvements have been made to the housing stock - but such a comparison also shows that much remains to be done. The sub-region still has serious housing problems; although the development of Peterlee has increased the stock by one-third and the District Council has undertaken some limited redevelopment, the housing "question" is a long way from being solved. The present acute housing shortage adds to problems of physical deficiency in the existing stock and highlights a situation characterised by restricted opportunities and lack of choice in housing.

Table 3.9 Housing conditions - selected criteria

	Easington R.D. villages		Peterlee
	1948	1971	1971
% of households without a hot water supply	N/A	10%	0.2%
% of households without a fixed bath	46%	16%	0.3%
% of households without an indoor W.C.	74%	23%	0.2%
(% of households lacking one or more of these three amenities)	(N/A)	(24%)	(0.6%)
% of households without a separate kitchen	30%	N/A	N/A
% of households living at a density of more than 1 person per room	35%	10.5%	9.7%

Sources: 1948 Easington Social Survey and 1971 census.

Note that 1971 figures for amenities refer to exclusive use by the household.

Data on household amenities can only be taken to be indicative of housing problems; such figures cannot be used directly to define the scale of these problems. As Norman Dennis (1970, 1972) and J.G. Davies (1972) have convincingly shown, a house which does not

possess an inside W.C. is not necessarily "unfit for human habitation", although the perceptions of Local Authorities and residents may differ on this point. Similarly, no account is taken of structural and environmental conditions; there are those who argue that some colliery houses, whilst lacking amenities, are more soundly built and better designed than Peterlee houses which possess the three basic amenities recorded by the census (hot water supply, fixed bath, inside W.C.).

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that there are large numbers of houses in the villages which are substandard and inadequate by the definitions of both the District Council and residents. Certainly, there is abundant visual evidence of decay and dereliction in several of the villages to confirm the existence of a severe housing problem (see Plates 20 and 21) and the fact that much of the worst housing is still occupied emphasises the acute shortage. In 1974 the Corporation's Policy Research Unit undertook a small-scale survey in the villages and stated that they had found "extreme stress, hardship and indignity stemming from the appalling housing conditions and feelings of powerlessness in the face of the authorities".⁽¹⁾ A few months later a press article⁽²⁾ on Station Town, "the most desperate spot in County Durham", focussed on the living conditions of squatters in a village of "shattered houses - just front doors with broken insides". Houses on the verge of collapse were still occupied by those who had nowhere else to go. Parts of Station Town have since been demolished - but there remain other, slightly less "desperate spots" in the area.

(1) Housing Working Party - A background paper contributed by the Policy Research Unit, P.D.C. (undated), p.4. This paper, containing harsh criticism of both the Corporation and the Council, was not in fact presented to the Working Party.

(2) "'Desperate' who are condemned for their poverty" by Jackie Levitas, Peterlee Chronicle, 13.12.74.

There are several reasons why the District continues to have a considerable amount of bad housing. One explanation would seem to be that the restrictions on the Council's efforts to redevelop the villages during the 1950s and 1960s meant that these problems were carried over into the 1970s and could only begin to be tackled after the County Council's village policy was relaxed (see section 2.2 above). Only in recent years has the District Council been able to pursue large-scale demolition programmes which did not produce the side-effect of forced migration by some families - those "living in" - to Peterlee. Secondly, a large proportion of the worst housing in the area is colliery housing, some of which is now owner-occupied but the majority of which is still under the ownership of the N.C.B. The 1971 census showed, in fact, that about 60% of the 5,000 houses without the three basic amenities were in the private unfurnished rented sector - which here almost wholly comprises N.C.B. housing. The significance of this is that the N.C.B. has been unwilling to modernise houses in villages where the colliery has closed whilst in those villages containing active collieries the N.C.B. has usually offered to effect improvements in exchange for rents. In some villages, notably Horden, this challenge to the principle of rent-free colliery housing has largely been resisted and consequently few improvements have been undertaken. In the older villages, the situation has been exacerbated by what appears to be the N.C.B.'s tendency to abandon houses, leaving them to fall into disrepair and apparently showing a great reluctance to demolish or dispose of them to the Local Authority. Hence, in some villages it has taken years for the Council to acquire houses from the N.C.B. which have long since been scheduled for demolition or declared "unfit".(1)

(1) This problem of acquisition was brought to our attention during discussions with Parish Councillors in Autumn 1976. Apparently this has had particularly adverse consequences for Wheatley Hill.

Since restrictions on redevelopment of the villages were lifted in 1974, the District Council has been able to begin the long overdue task of reconstruction. Substantial clearance programmes were formulated, involving the demolition of more than 700 houses between 1974 and 1976 and a further 650 in the period 1976-80. The Council also plans to increase the rate of new completions to over 400 houses a year by the late 1970s. Already a large section of Horden has been cleared (Plate 22) and new housing is nearing completion at Shotton (Plate 23). If the Council's plans survive expenditure cuts the 1981 census figures will show a considerable improvement compared with the 1971 census and the contrast between Peterlee and its surrounding area will, at least in these terms, be much reduced.

However, the change in policy which has enabled the District Council to redevelop the villages has probably come too late to bring about a complete revival; some of the more blighted villages have seen the progressive loss of many of their shops and services - some have transferred their premises to Peterlee - and redevelopment will not reverse that loss. More generally, the policy which condemned these villages to decline must be regarded as erroneous, both in planning and social terms; its benefits were few and its consequences predominantly harmful. The policy seems to have had the effect of merely postponing redevelopment, leaving the villages in a state of limbo for many years and generating new problems which now have to be faced.

The housing difficulties which the villages have experienced and which are now beginning to be dealt with are compounded by the overall shortage in the sub-region which produces increasing housing stress. The shortage itself stems from several factors which include a general trend towards smaller households and an accelerated rate



Plate 20 Shotton Colliery:clearance.1978.



Plate 21 Shotton Colliery:decay.1978.



Plate 22 Horden:clearance. 1978.



Plate 23 Shotton Colliery:new housing development. 1978.

of household formation by the second generation, owing to a bulge in the population structure. To some extent the shortage is unexplained and was not predicted; it followed a period of housing surplus - at least at Peterlee - and unfortunately came almost at the end of Peterlee's house-building programme. By mid-1974 Peterlee's waiting list had grown to more than 2,000 whilst Easington had twice that number of applicants. Since there was very little overlap between the two lists but considerable barriers prevented many people from being eligible even for inclusion on the lists, this understates the position.

Stemming immediately from this situation are the related problems of access to housing and the nature of allocation policies. As far as the Corporation is concerned the second generation is the main priority (plus key workers) while the District Council must regard its major priority to be families displaced by slum clearance - these demands take up a large proportion of the allocation. Peterlee's system bears almost no relation to variations in need whilst Easington is concerned primarily with existing households in the greatest need. Thus the pattern of migration of young people and newly-formed households to Peterlee continues. At the same time, neither housing authority is able to accommodate "outsiders" or those not in these groups. The Corporation's Policy Research Unit referred to "the lack of special housing for the elderly and disabled, for the large family, for the single, for the mobile and for those who need sheltered accommodation or hostels such as the mentally ill, the unmarried mother and the housebound"⁽¹⁾ and they point out that apart from keyworkers "the opportunities for the 'outsider' are very small indeed, even if brought up in the area or with close relatives in the area".⁽²⁾

(1) Housing Working Party - A background paper contributed by the Policy Research Unit, P.D.C., p.9.

(2) Ibid., p.10.

But the vital factor which places severe restrictions on opportunities and choice in housing in the sub-region as a whole is the pattern of tenure. Within the former Rural District almost three-quarters of the housing stock is under State ownership (the Council, the Corporation and the N.C.B.) and the level of owner-occupation, about 25% of the stock, is only half the national average. The low level of owner-occupation leads to inflated house prices and means that many potential owners find it necessary to leave the sub-region to fulfil their aspirations. Moreover, access to State housing is highly restricted - eligibility is usually dependent on the qualification of local residence and, in the case of N.C.B. housing, mining employment - so that the owner-occupied sector provides virtually the only opportunities for 'outsiders'. The low level of owner-occupation, together with the poor physical condition of much of this housing, thus sets a limit to the opportunities for those ineligible for State housing.

A long history of housing shortage in the villages has ensured their continued isolation from external influences; no "new blood" is coming into the villages. Council houses are allocated by Parish Council committees which in many cases will only consider applications from local people.⁽¹⁾ In the face of decline and the outmigration of younger people to Peterlee, the villages have had to try to protect their interests and as a result have largely continued to be "closed" communities.

Differences in allocation policy within the State-owned sector have, as we have shown, generated migration patterns which have denied freedom of choice. But changes are about to take place. In

(1) In 1976 only 4 out of 13 Parish Council Housing Committees (Easington, Hawthorn, Trimdon, Wheatley Hill) did not insist on residence/work-place qualifications for inclusion on their lists. Easington Parish, however, does not consider applications from Peterlee tenants.

1978 the District Council will gain control of Peterlee's rented housing. There is also a possibility that the Council will, in the future, purchase, retain and hopefully improve some of the colliery housing in the older villages. The N.C.B. is an increasingly reluctant slum landlord and has recently announced its intention to divest itself of housing in those villages where the colliery has closed: this will probably mean that the Council will have to buy these properties since most tenants would be unable to do so. It is of interest to note that the N.C.B. has, like the colliery companies, progressively sought to shed housing responsibilities, leaving the problem to other State agencies - the Development Corporation and the District Council.

It is thus possible to envisage a situation in which 60% to 70% of the area's housing is under the ownership and control of the District Council. But this will not necessarily mean that the system will be more flexible or sensitive to individual needs and preferences. It is unlikely, for example, that in present circumstances the Parish Councils will accept a significant number of applications from Peterlee tenants and the continuing housing shortage rules out the possibility of accommodating more than a tiny proportion of applicants from outside the District. In the short term what is required is a system able to deal with a large number of transfers by mutual exchange and it is understood that the Council is currently considering the use of a computer to match up transfer applications. It may be, however, that such a system would be difficult to operate if, as one suspects, the majority of transferees wish to move from Peterlee to the villages and few hope to move in the reverse direction. Personal preferences and/or the failure to make innovations in the management of housing may prevent the realisation of some of the theoretical advantages of having a large section of the housing stock under the control of a single (democratically-elected) authority.

Finally, in the longer term, it is difficult even to imagine the sub-region without serious housing problems. The legacy of worn-out housing is still very substantial and there are indications - discussed in section 5 below - that deficiencies in the construction of some of the new houses at Peterlee will add to the Council's problems. The shortage is very likely to continue and may not be tackled until most of the houses now considered sub-standard are demolished or modernised - that programme could well extend into the mid-1980s. Aside from this, the future scale and pattern of the sub-region's housing problems must depend upon its economic prosperity. Unless major new industrial development occurs - especially to provide replacement jobs for those lost at local collieries when, as is inevitable, their reserves are exhausted - the housing problem may "solve itself" by large scale emigration from the sub-region.

5. Corporation housing: quality and maintenance

In the previous section we warned against assessments of housing quality based solely on the presence or absence of certain household amenities. Here we briefly discuss, in relation to Corporation housing at Peterlee, some other aspects of "quality" which are of importance in assessing "consumer satisfaction" with housing opportunities.

Respondents to the 1974 NEAS Survey were asked to judge their houses in terms of four selected criteria: design, privacy, outlook and building quality. It was found that the greatest source of dissatisfaction was with building quality, which more than two-thirds of tenants considered to be average or below average (Table 3.10). Design elements - which can be taken to include privacy and outlook - were judged more favourably, with about half the tenants giving "good" or "very good" assessments.

Table 3.10 Assessments of Corporation Housing by tenants

House characteristic	V.Good/Good		Average		Bad/V.Bad		(Totals)
"Design"	(81)	48%	(44)	26%	(43)	25%	(168)
"Privacy"	(80)	48%	(36)	22%	(50)	30%	(166)
"Outlook"	(91)	55%	(39)	24%	(36)	22%	(166)
"Building quality"	(53)	32%	(52)	31%	(61)	37%	(166)

Source: 1974 NEAS survey (Tenants only).

In part, dissatisfaction with design reflects changes in requirements, fashions and styles of life. Changing needs and their recognition by housing authorities are demonstrated by differences between houses built in the 1950s and more recent housing built to Parker-Morris standards. Hence, changing patterns of domestic life lead some tenants of the older houses to complain of a shortage of power points and inadequate storage space. This kind of design deficiency is perhaps unavoidable and inevitable but is, nonetheless,

a source of dissatisfaction. And one of the major problems of rented housing is that the dissatisfied tenant is generally unwilling - and often not allowed - to remedy these deficiencies. When the landlord does effect improvements they are not always suited to the tenant's requirements and the landlord of a very large number of properties - such as Peterlee Development Corporation - tends to implement standardised improvement schemes. At Peterlee some tenants complained bitterly that the Corporation, in carrying out a "smokeless zone" scheme, had removed their open coal fires and given them no choice as to the kind of heating system to be put in their place.

However, there are other, avoidable, design problems. Earlier (section 2.1) we indicated that some of the Passmore houses and the Skarne houses had in-built design deficiencies which subsequently had to be remedied. In many cases it was found that flat-roofed houses were not watertight partly, it must be added, because of the carelessness of the contractors but also because poor materials were used and designs were impractical. Perhaps the most remarkable example is Southway, part of the South West Area built by Milton Hindle and designed by Passmore. Although remedial work was carried out to these houses shortly after their completion - following a rainstorm in 1961 which had provided a vivid demonstration of their deficiencies⁽¹⁾ - residents have continued to suffer problems of leaking windows, draughty rooms, lack of privacy and poor access. Some apparently re-named the area "Slumway" and challenged Passmore to "leave his villa in Malta and spend a winter in one of these houses".⁽²⁾ Responding to repeated complaints, the Corporation

(1) This storm brought 150 complaints of "serious raining-in" on the S.W.I and Dene House estates and this "appalling" situation was described in a Report from the Chief Housing Officer to the Corporation Board in October 1961. The Report (a full extract of which is given in Robinson, 1975a, pp.45-6) notes that the major causes were "design faults" in windows, wall panels and damp proof courses which do "not even comply with model Byelaw standard".

(2) "Showpiece homes 'Slumway'", Peterlee Chronicle, 7.5.76.

announced in 1976 its intention to spend £99,000 repairing the overhanging sections of Passmore's cantilever houses - these had begun to bend and sag and were upheld by timber supports - and a further £300,000 on improvements, notably insulation and water-proofing, to 86 other houses on the estate. This will not, however, solve the problems of access which led one resident to remark that she wished Passmore "had been put into a pram and tipped up on end to get into the house". In fact, that kind of problem is common throughout Peterlee and often stems from an attempt to maximise living space and thus minimise access space (especially hallways) within tight budget constraints. It was reported that this often means that "coffins have to be turned nearly upside down" - a circumstance which drew the cynical comment that "the planners do not plan for the final contingency".⁽¹⁾ External access arrangements provide further examples of design difficulties which probably cannot be remedied. Respondents' assertions that house numbering systems are illogical and that much confusion occurs because "houses are built back to front" show that Radburn layouts are not always understood or appreciated by residents even though they may be well justified by eminently reasonable planning principles.

Given the complexities of personal preferences and dispositions which form the basis of tenants' satisfaction with their housing it is perhaps encouraging that so many tenants rated design, privacy and outlook as "good" or "very good". Certainly, we should not belittle the Corporation's achievements in this respect, nor underestimate the difficulties involved in planning and designing houses which match up to the needs of tenants but are within the cost yardsticks set by Central Government. On the other hand, it does

(1) Peterlee Chronicle, 7.5.76.

seem that the Corporation's experiments produced various unwelcome and avoidable problems which, particularly in the case of the Passmore estates, brought kudos for the Corporation while leaving tenants with practical problems.

Questions of design and building quality are ultimately linked to the need for repairs and maintenance and there is evidence that some Peterlee houses, with inherent design and construction deficiencies, are a liability in terms of maintenance. Apart from the situation we have described in the South West Area, serious problems have come to light through the complaints of an action group based at the Sunny Blunts estate. Tenants there and at Oakerside say that they have suffered leaking houses, dampness, mould and slime for several years and, in an attempt to have these deficiencies remedied recently threatened to sue the Corporation. Tenants living in the adjoining South West V (Christchurch Place) area, in houses completed only within the last three years, also complained of dampness and related problems. The Action Group has succeeded in pressing for an independent inquiry (currently in progress) into their allegations of structural faults and bad workmanship.⁽¹⁾

The seriousness of these problems is underlined by the enormous repair bill - at least £400,000 - for the Passmore houses in the South West Area. The inherent problems of "non-traditional" housing are further illustrated by the fact that the Corporation began an expensive programme in 1975 to renovate hundreds of flat roofs. But aside from these major projects, the problems of routine repairs and maintenance are also considerable. The 1974 NEAS survey found

(1) The Action Group's complaints were reported in the Peterlee Chronicle, 26.11.76, 28.1.77 and 11.2.77.

that many tenants were highly dissatisfied with the level of maintenance and several complained of difficulties in getting the Corporation to attend to repairs; at that time the Corporation's maintenance section was so small and disorganised that it was overwhelmed with requests. Shortly after the survey, the maintenance section was expanded and crash programmes were begun, concentrating on each estate in turn, in an attempt to deal with a backlog of several thousand repairs. During the first nine months of these programmes 25,000 separate repair jobs were completed - an average of about four jobs per house. By 1975-6 about half the Corporation's rent income was spent on repairs; in that year this expenditure totalled £687,000. The average annual repairs expenditure on a Peterlee house was thus about £102 which compares with a national figure, for Local Authority repairs to Council houses in 1975-6, of only £62⁽¹⁾. Considering that the Peterlee total included little of the expenditure on roof renovation and none of the costs of the South West Area repairs programme and bearing in mind that the Local Authorities have an older stock of housing, this is strong evidence that Peterlee has extraordinary maintenance problems.

Attempts have recently been made to reduce these costs by leaving tenants with the responsibility for certain minor repairs but it is not clear how far tenants have responded to this. One of the difficulties is that tenants are understandably reluctant to take responsibilities whilst being denied a freedom of choice in other ways (choosing the colour which their house is painted, for example). The maintenance problem, along with many other aspects of housing, is thus partly bound up with the policies and methods of housing management. This issue - how the Corporation performs as a landlord - is considered again in Chapter VI below.

(1) Peterlee figures from the Corporation's Annual Report, 1976, Property Revenue Account Pt. A. National figures from the Guardian, 23.9.77 (Report by National Consumer Council).

6. Concluding comment

To complete this chapter we summarise a few of the main points which should be borne in mind in interpreting the remainder of this study.

We have stressed that the Corporation has been responsible for most of Peterlee's housing development; the involvement of other agencies has been minimal. The majority of Peterlee's housing stock is owned and managed by the Corporation but transfer of this housing to the District Council is scheduled for 1978. It is argued that the Corporation's attempts to innovate and experiment in housing design and construction have not been wholly successful; the Corporation's concern with establishing a progressive image seems to have taken precedence over a concern to meet the needs of tenants.

Migration data illustrate some of the consequences of the long-term policy to re-structure the settlement pattern. Peterlee has attracted young, predominantly skilled people from the surrounding villages and elsewhere. Severe pressure on housing in the villages brought a steady influx of local families into Peterlee although this movement slackened in the 1960s, enabling the immigration of outsiders to Peterlee. In recent years the housing shortage has been acutely felt and Peterlee's intake has largely been restricted to key workers, second generation Peterlee households and newly married couples from the villages. During the 1950s Peterlee could claim to be a "New Town for Miners" but today only a small proportion of Peterlee's working men are engaged in that industry.

Peterlee's high turnover rate, together with the characteristics of the intake and emigrant populations, has had the effect of rejuvenating the town's age structure. Even in 1971, twenty years after the arrival of the first tenants, more than half the population was under the age of 25 and a quarter were children under the age of ten.

The injection of a substantial stock of new housing into the sub-region has clearly had beneficial effects. Overcrowding has been reduced, far fewer couples are forced to live in with their parents and many families now enjoy improved amenities and a better physical environment. But Peterlee is no Utopia. Aside from the broad problems of unemployment and Peterlee's retarded social development (issues discussed in chapters IV and V below) the development and management of housing has not been an unmitigated success. The stigmatised area of Edenhill, the inbuilt deficiencies of "non-traditional" houses and the Corporation's formidable maintenance problems provide some of the more obvious examples of failure. While it would be difficult to dismiss these problems as unfortunate and unavoidable shortcomings, it would be impossible to deny that the effects of Peterlee on the villages were planned and intended. Planning policy ensured the relative decline of the villages and made it necessary for many young people to move to Peterlee for housing. The reconstruction of the villages was in many cases delayed, so that the area retained a legacy of poor housing into the 1970s. It is evident that much of the cost of the New Town has been borne by the villages while, as we point out throughout this study, the benefits have been of dubious value. The hypothetical - but nonetheless important - question which must be raised is: would it have been "better" to redevelop and expand the villages rather than build a New Town? This question must involve a consideration of many factors, issues and alternative policies; our attempt to tackle this central problem is thus left until the final chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PETERLEE - INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

was unable to pursue the larger industrial development programme it favoured, on account of its powerlessness in relation to other agencies. However, during the first decade of Peterlee's existence, some success, albeit limited, was achieved in attracting new female employment to the town.

Following this we discuss "the second phase" of industrial development policy at Peterlee, dealing with the period 1958-71. This period witnessed a substantial reduction in the mining labour force - which was not met by the provision of alternative jobs at Peterlee. With the revival of regional policy, notably through the publication of the Hailsham Plan in 1963, it appeared possible that Peterlee would be able to attract new industry and begin to meet the increasingly urgent need for additional male employment. But these hopes faded when Peterlee was excluded from the Special Development Area schedule in 1967. Under the chairmanship of T. Dan Smith, the Corporation failed in its attempt to establish a "Science Centre" at Peterlee - an ambitious alternative to the previous policy of attracting individual firms (which had proved largely unproductive).

Section 4 reviews the period 1971-77 (the "third phase"), during which greater efforts were made to promote Peterlee to industry. Revisions in regional policy and infrastructural improvements helped the Corporation in its efforts to persuade industry that "Peterlee is the Place to Be" and several firms moved into the town. A significant number of new male jobs has been provided by these newcomers, but employment creation has not been sufficient to prevent a steady increase in male unemployment.

Sections 5.1 and 5.2 provide a broader view of male and female employment/unemployment situations within the sub-region, with particular reference to the contribution of Peterlee. Many of the observations made in earlier parts of the chapter are repeated and summarised in these sections and the chapter ends with a short concluding comment (section 6).

2. The First Phase: 1946-58

2.1 Initial proposals and policies

From the outset, new industrial development had formed an integral part of the Peterlee proposal. In "Farewell Squalor", Clarke had made repeated reference to the damaging effects of the area's overdependence on a single industry. The near-total reliance on mining employment had had "adverse effects on social character", had produced an "unbalanced" social and economic structure and led to the "migration of the more enterprising members of the community", while the experiences of the 1920s and 1930s had demonstrated the vulnerability of the area to fluctuations in the coal trade.⁽¹⁾ There was a need, Clarke argued, for diversification. Moreover, there was an acute shortage of female employment; the fact that a large number of women had worked in Ordnance factories during the war seemed to indicate that they were prepared to go out to work if jobs were made available.

With regard to male employment, Clarke maintained that there was an immediate need for new sources of employment for men who, for a variety of reasons, were unsuited to mining. This in itself might help to reduce migration. But in the longer term, it was pointed out that a decrease in the mining labour force was inevitable. It was estimated that, as a result of the progressive depletion of reserves, some 4,410 miners would be "surplus" to requirements by 1974.⁽²⁾ In addition, mechanisation and re-organisation might mean the loss of many more jobs. Information was limited and the implications of Nationalization were unknown but Clarke was evidently concerned to take a realistic view of the future.

(1) Clarke, 1947, ch. IX: "The Case for New Industry".

(2) Ibid., p. 59. These figures were based on pre-Nationalization estimates of the life-expectancy of collieries in the R.D.

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Accordingly, Clarke's plan for Peterlee⁽¹⁾ included an industrial estate, sited to the north of Shotton Colliery. Although just outside the New Town, this site had the advantages of rail access and a central location relative to the villages. It was zoned for both light and heavy industries, employing both men and women; Clarke favoured engineering plants and consumer goods industries.

The importance of the industrial component of the Peterlee scheme was later stressed by the R.D.C. Chairman at the Council's meeting with the Minister in August 1947. He declared that

"a suitable industrial area had been earmarked in their plan /"Farewell Squalor"/ facilities existed, the manpower was available and it was therefore in the national interest for this part of the scheme to commence immediately, and proceed with the least delay possible." (2)

It is likely that the note of urgency in this statement stems from the fact that the New Town proposal had led to the postponement of the development of an industrial (Trading) estate at Station Town, Wingate. In September 1946 the Board of Trade's agents, North-East Trading Estates, had informed the Council of their intention to provide a 27 acre site for light industry (meaning predominantly female-employing) at Station Town. But some months later it was announced that this had been held in abeyance, pending the Minister's consideration of the Peterlee proposal.⁽³⁾ No doubt the Council was concerned that this opportunity may, consequently, have been missed. Certainly it is clear that the R.D.C., in common with every other Local Authority in the region, was anxious to

(1) See ch. II above, Fig. 2.3.

(2) Minister's meeting with the Local Authorities at Easington, 27.8.47., verbatim report, p.1.

(3) Easington R.D.C. minutes, September 1946 and March 1947.

secure new industry - but it became increasingly evident that this would depend upon the successful development of Peterlee as an industrial centre.

While the local view - emphasising the need for the early provision of new sources of employment both for men and women - was fairly clear cut, the attitude of the State at a national level was more nebulous consisting of a mix of disparate views. On the one hand, the newly-established N.C.B. was concerned to maintain (and possibly expand) its labour force and hence would not countenance the development of new industries which might attract men away from the pits. The N.C.B. had initially welcomed the scheme as a means to stabilise the labour force by the provision of improved living conditions and it appears that no objection was raised to the possible creation of new jobs for women. But the suggestion of developing a large-scale industrial estate at, or near, Peterlee which would provide both male and female employment was unacceptable. Steele, in his detailed survey of the debates on Peterlee's industrial development conducted in the period 1947-51, notes that the strength and influence of the N.C.B.'s attitude is difficult to document and elusive. Nevertheless, Steele regards the N.C.B.'s opposition to the creation of a competitive labour market to be of central importance, both before and after designation.⁽¹⁾

The attitude of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning seems to have undergone modification as the Peterlee project was developed and re-defined in the months before designation. During 1946 Clarke

(1) Steele's work has considerably assisted the compilation of our discussion on the initial formulation of industrial policy for Peterlee. For fuller details of the issues and interests involved see Steele, 1962, ch. IV and Appendix II.

had worked closely with the Ministry's regional office in preparing his Outline Plan, published in March 1947 under the title "Farewell Squalor".⁽¹⁾ It appears that the views presented in that document were in close accord with those of the Ministry and this would seem to be confirmed by the comments of Mr. Tetlow, the Regional Controller, at a meeting with Easington R.D.C. on 12th March 1947.⁽²⁾ Tetlow argued that new industry, providing jobs for men and women, was required in the area; mining would remain the basic industry but diversification was necessary to strengthen the economic structure.

Gradually, however, the Ministry's attitude changed. According to Steele's account, the Ministry's concern to provide new industry at Peterlee - or, more generally, in east Durham - weakened in response to objections from the N.C.B., Hartlepool interests and the Ministry of Labour. While the N.C.B. opposed the development of male-employing industry, the Ministry of Labour claimed that the provision of light industry in the Peterlee area would seriously reduce the supply of female labour available to the Trading Estate at Hartlepool. West Hartlepool Borough Council re-iterated this concern and later objected to the New Town scheme at the Public Inquiry (in January, 1948).

By August 1947, when the Minister, Lewis Silkin, met the Rural District Council,⁽³⁾ the industrial aspect of the Peterlee proposal had been considerably diluted. Silkin said that Peterlee would provide jobs for women - he commented on the low proportion of women working in the area - but did not say whether manufacturing, as well as service sector, employment would be provided. And on the question

(1) See ch. II, section 3.2 above.

(2) Steele, 1962, p. 162.

(3) See also ch. II, section 3.3 above.

of male employment, Silkin did no more than pay lip-service to the Reithian principle of social balance. He argued that miners must be less isolated and insular and be given the opportunity to mix with "people of other occupations and income levels" but did not state what kinds of employment might be provided or when it might be provided. No mention was made concerning the establishment of an industrial estate; the Minister's statement was vague and contained no assurances on the matter of industrial development, other than that social/occupational "balance" was a long-term aim.

This vagueness was carried through to the wording of the Draft Designation Order for the New Town, published in October 1947. This again referred to the objective of a "balanced community" and, linked to this, it was stated that Peterlee would

"provide the industrial employment to absorb the female labour available in the district and any male labour not employed in coalmining."

This statement, repeated in the final Designation Order, contained ambiguities which had the effect of subsequently leaving industrial policy open to differing interpretations and conflicting views. In particular, it was unclear whether job opportunities were only to be provided for men currently unemployed - in many cases as a result of mining disablement - or whether alternative jobs might also be provided for miners. An important omission was the time-scale for such development, so that the Corporation was later to find it difficult to argue for the early build-up of industry as an assurance against future mining redundancies.

The situation is further confused by the fact that the Ministry had apparently condoned the development of an industrial estate in Peterlee, this decision having been given to the Advisory Committee.

The Committee had also been informed⁽¹⁾ that the Minister was prepared to have the estate controlled by the Corporation; such an arrangement might have enabled the Corporation to counter the opposition of the N.C.B., Ministry of Labour and, later, the Board of Trade to the provision of male employment at Peterlee.

Insofar as it is possible to summarise the position before designation, it can be said that local interests were in conflict with (mainly) certain national interests, while the Ministry of Town and Country Planning remained in a somewhat awkward, contradictory position. At designation, the situation remained unclear. New jobs might be provided for women at Peterlee, although the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Draft Designation Order made reference to the availability of jobs at Hartlepool, thought sufficient to meet short-term needs.⁽²⁾ The possibility, envisaged by Clarke, of considerable new employment for men became progressively less feasible. As the problem of securing increased output from the collieries became an issue of major concern during 1947, policies to conserve the mining labour force took precedence over policies to socially and economically diversify coalfield areas. The result of these conflicts of interest was a very weak definition of Peterlee's industrial role and, subsequently, little was achieved in developing Peterlee as an industrial centre.

2.2 A decade of inaction, 1948-58.

In the decade following Peterlee's designation the Development Corporation repeatedly declared its commitment to early and substantial industrial growth at Peterlee, involving the provision of jobs for men and women. But the Corporation was not free to

(1) Minutes of Advisory Committee, 16.12.47.

(2) Steele, 1962, p.164.

pursue its own preferred policies - which would have involved vigorous attempts to attract industry to the New Town - because it did not have control of the industrial estate. North-East Trading Estates (N.E.T.E.) had taken responsibility for the Peterlee industrial estate and overall policy was administered by the Board of Trade - which favoured very limited industrial development at Peterlee, involving solely the provision of female employment. The Corporation's bargaining position was weak and it received very little support. Even the County Council, which had previously supported Peterlee's industrial claims, frustrated the Corporation's efforts to press its case.

During the first two years of the Corporation's existence, research and policy work was overshadowed by the coal extraction problem but Lubetkin's team did give close consideration to the question of industrial policy. At this time no firm decision had been taken on the provision of an industrial estate - agreement was only reached in September 1950 - but the Corporation was anxious that an estate should be provided in the designated area and under its control. It was argued that there was scope for immediate industrial development, providing work for an estimated 1,100 women then willing to work if jobs were provided, plus 280 men unemployed and "physically capable of only indoor factory employment". Looking to the long term, it was suggested that 4,850 men and 1,950 women would need jobs in manufacturing industry at Peterlee by 1962.⁽¹⁾ Lubetkin's team implied that the N.C.B.'s estimate of the scale of manpower reductions in the future was unrealistic. The N.C.B. forecast that 3,400 jobs at collieries in the Rural District might be lost

(1) Estimates in Analysis of Planning Problems, P.D.C., January 1950, pp. 25-7.

by 1971 but the Corporation noted that "unofficial estimates" had put the figure at 7,000.⁽¹⁾ This latter estimate was then used to justify a larger-scale industrial development programme. The Corporation's outlook was also conditioned by a concern that Peterlee should, by providing new social and employment opportunities, be able to counter migration; this in turn entailed the provision of jobs for a larger population in the future, catering for a retained natural increase component. The role of working women was also stressed, in terms of national and local interests

"the strong tradition that miners' wives do not go out to work seems to be a result of the lack of job opportunities rather than its cause The country needs the work these women can do, and the district needs the wages they can earn. Under-employment of women was always a contributory cause of poverty in mining areas." (2)

The early research documents make some reference to the opposition of the N.C.B. and Hartlepool's interests. Attempts were made to defuse the N.C.B.'s objections to male-employing industry by arguing that the gradual build up of alternative employment would lessen the impact of redundancies and thus help the N.C.B. pursue its plans for mechanisation and re-organisation. The Hartlepool objections were dismissed with the argument that Hartlepool did not, and could not, provide jobs for many women in the Rural District since few were prepared to undertake such a long journey to work.

The main points of policy put forward by the Lubetkin team were re-iterated in the Grenfell-Baines Master Plan produced in 1952:

"Today mining is prosperous and likely to remain so for a considerable time, but the combined effects of mechanisation and the running out of seams cannot be ignored. Nor can the incidence of disablement. In spite of the importance of providing jobs for women the employment of men surplus to mining is therefore of greater import." (3)

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- (1) Peterlee-Social and Economic Research, P.D.C., January 1950, p.129. It is understood that at this time the N.C.B. was reluctant to give local forecasts of future manpower needs; this, of course, made it difficult for other agencies to pursue and justify preventative industrial development policies. In the event, the unofficial estimates also proved over-optimistic; about 10,000 local mining jobs were lost by 1970.
- (2) Ibid., p.125.
- (3) Peterlee Master Plan Report, 1952, p.28 (my emphasis).

Additionally, the provision of female employment now had a greater significance as a result of the problems experienced by the first tenants in meeting high rents and living costs; it could, "by increasing family income, go a long way towards resolving the problem of rent in the new town".⁽¹⁾

But by this time the Corporation could do little more than recommend industrial development policies to the Board of Trade; it was unable to implement them. The Corporation had succeeded, despite some opposition, to secure an industrial site within the designated area but had lost control of it to N.E.T.E. and the Board of Trade. This situation arose because of Peterlee's location within the North-East Development Area, created under the 1945 Distribution of Industry Act. In the Development Areas the Board of Trade was responsible for attracting and locating new firms and providing incentives while its estate companies (such as N.E.T.E.) administered industrial sites and built factories. The Corporation had initially hoped to develop its industrial estate without intervention from the Board of Trade yet at the same time also having the ability to offer regional policy incentives to firms. But the Corporation failed in this attempt (although Ministerial assurances on this point had been given to Dr. Felton in 1947), possibly because the Board of Trade, a branch of the State with considerable political muscle, would not accept a competing agency in the Development Area.⁽²⁾ Consequently, it was agreed that N.E.T.E. should develop the Peterlee industrial estate. In September 1950, a Joint Industrial Committee, comprising N.E.T.E., the Board of Trade and the Corporation, was set up to discuss and formulate policies. The Corporation's influence was limited although efforts were made

(1) Ibid., p.39.

(2) Following Lubetkin's departure the Corporation was also increasingly prepared to accept compromise policies to secure progress after their experience of long delays over the coal problem.

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to forge closer links by the appointment of Mr. Sadler-Forster, chairman of N.E.T.E., to the Corporation Board.

This arrangement, which remained unchanged until 1958, meant in practice that the Board of Trade was almost entirely responsible for directing Peterlee's industrial development.⁽¹⁾ And the Board's view differed markedly from that of the Corporation.

"There was a certain difference of opinion as between the Corporation and the Board of Trade when the Master Plan was being prepared as to the quantity and type of industry required in the New Town, the Board of Trade's opinion being that employment was needed for approximately 3,000 people and that service industry alone would adequately cater for such a force. Whilst the view of the Corporation was that the employment requirement would be more of the order of 8,000 and that some manufacturing industry would need to be imported." (2)

In fact, the Board did come to accept the need for some female-employing manufacturing industry at Peterlee and two factories were built on the N.E.T.E. site. Jeremiah Ambler Ltd., a Bradford-based firm of textile spinners began production in 1955 and Alexandre Ltd., clothing manufacturers from Leeds, established a factory at Peterlee in 1956. Both were predominantly female employers, principally attracted by the availability of a large reserve of female labour. By 1958 Ambler and Alexandre provided jobs for about 600 women and only 100 men.

To the Board of Trade this was possibly regarded as a satisfactory level of development but in the Corporation's view it was far from adequate. The Corporation envisaged Peterlee as an industrial centre serving the needs of almost the whole of Easington R.D. while the Board thought that Peterlee's service and manufacturing industry

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- (1) Steele (1962, Appendix II) notes that such was the Board's concern to control the Peterlee estate that, when the Corporation attempted to promote the estate to industrialists by publicity in 1951, the Board strongly objected. The Corporation was informed that the Board was prepared to take sanctions against them to enforce their objections.
- (2) Quote from Industrial Report, no date, c. 1962 (a P.D.C. internal report in Policy Research Unit's files).

would mainly provide employment for the female residents of the New Town. But the principal area of disagreement centred on the question of male employment.

With regard to the Board's attitude, it is instructive to return to the situation in the late 1940s. In the Pepler-MacFarlane plan for the North-East Development Area, prepared for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and circulated as a confidential document in 1949, it was stated that

"In areas of stable mining where little diminution of employment is anticipated (particularly in East Durham and South-East Northumberland) male employment should be concentrated on mining, and other industry that would compete with mining for available labour should not be introduced. Hence, in the main, such industry should be restricted to predominantly female-employing concerns."⁽¹⁾

Moreover, with reference to the "stable mining area" of Peterlee/East Durham, it was noted that the limited employment decline in mining which would occur will be spread over "an extensive area" and consequently "it cannot be viewed as a serious factor".⁽²⁾

The Board of Trade seems to have shared this opinion. Although recognising that the East Durham pits would have declining manpower needs, this was not seen as an immediate or serious problem. Besides which, the problems of the older, western part of the Durham coalfield were far more pressing and - in the context of weakening regional policy under the Conservative Government - the Board's effective regional development powers were diminishing. The Board was unable and probably unwilling to concern itself with long term preventative policies. In addition, the N.C.B. did not provide revised local estimates of future employment in east Durham until 1959 so that the Board was able to point to the (unrealistic) figures issued in 1949 as justification for its inactivity in attracting male-employing industry.

(1) North-East Development Area Outline Plan, Interim Confidential Edition, 1949, p. 295 (Principal Recommendations, No.1).

(2) Ibid., p.152. It is clear that Pepler and MacFarlane were anxious that their plan should not interfere with the N.C.B.'s aims. For example, in connection with land use planning they pointed out (p.165) that "we were fully alive to the supreme importance of coal output and were therefore prepared to modify our plans drastically". Following discussion with the N.C.B. the

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However, the Board's main stated argument against the provision of new male manufacturing employment at Peterlee was that the industrial site was not suitable for such industries. The industrial estate at Peterlee (in the northern section of the designated area) lacked rail access and there were doubts concerning its stability with respect to mining subsidence. The Board of Trade seems to have equated male-employing industry with "heavy" industry and considered that such industry could not be located on a site without rail access and susceptible to subsidence. The Corporation had gone against the opinions of Clarke, the Pepler-MacFarlane report and the Board of Trade⁽¹⁾ in insisting upon an industrial site within the designated area and, in so doing, had gained an estate declared "unsuitable" for male-employing industries. Whether or not the Board's viewpoint was valid is perhaps of less importance than the fact that these points were used to justify their case against the Corporation's policy.

The Board of Trade thus argued that, if new "heavy" industry was to be introduced into east Durham additional industrial estates outside Peterlee would have to be established. The Board did not make serious efforts to do this, however, apparently leaving the problem to be resolved by the County Council and Easington R.D.C.

In preparing the County Development Plan, Durham County Council accepted the opinion of the Board of Trade. Having noted the development of an estate at Peterlee, it was pointed out that:

"two difficulties remain: it is not known whether the site will be sufficiently stable to take buildings for large male-employing industries and, in addition, it lacks rail access.

(1) In "Farewell Squalor" an estate near Shotton Colliery had been proposed, Pepler-MacFarlane had recommended Thornley Station and, in 1946, the Board of Trade/N.E.T.E. had considered a site at Station Town. All three sites had rail access - but were of doubtful stability.

It has therefore been felt wiser at this stage to provide sufficient land in the district outside Peterlee to meet the industrial needs of the area. This will involve a duplication in the provision of industrial land but in the circumstances this is considered unavoidable." (1)

Consequently, the County named additional sites at Station Town (up to 45 acres) and Thornley Station (40 acres) and the Easington Town Map also suggested a 75 acre industrial site at Blackhall Rocks. But these sites have remained undeveloped; the experience has been that Council-controlled industrial estates, with no more than nominal Board of Trade support, have not proved as "attractive" to industry as those administered by N.E.T.E. Hence, little was gained from the County Council's policy, while Peterlee's case was further weakened. The Corporation now had even greater difficulty in pressing its claim for new male-employing industry and could not find acceptance for its view of Peterlee as a major industrial centre serving the needs of the sub-region.

The decade following designation was thus marked by disagreement over Peterlee's industrial role and only limited development took place. Two factories, employing 600 women and 100 men had been established, which together met about half the "immediate" employment needs suggested by the Corporation in 1950. Evidently, the attitude of the Board of Trade was partly responsible for this lack of progress; summarising the situation a few years later, Peterlee's General Manager remarked that it had "been difficult to persuade the Board of Trade that Peterlee is not just a miners' town and even within the region it has never received the priority to which it was entitled" (A.V. Williams, Sunderland Echo, 15.8.62). But there were further complications which held back industrial development. Certainly doubts concerning the stability of the Peterlee site would dissuade some industrialists from re-locating there. While rail access may

(1) Durham County Development Plan, 1951, p.70.

not have been an important factor, road access certainly was and the main north-south route through the area, the A19, was a slow, unsatisfactory road greatly in need of improvement. In addition, during this period mining employment had hardly begun to contract; male unemployment was minimal (Fig. 4.2), the available male labour force was limited in size and it was difficult to justify importing new sources of male employment other than in the long term. Finally, by the mid-1950s, N.E.T.E. was virtually unable to build new factories because successive Government expenditure cuts had sharply reduced its capital budget.⁽¹⁾

Throughout this period the Corporation repeatedly stated the need for considerable industrial development to increase the female economic activity rate, to compensate for future mining redundancies and enable Peterlee to become a "balanced community". From time to time Mr. Shinwell, M.P. for the Easington constituency, informed Ministers of these needs through questions in the House of Commons but was answered with assurances, not positive action. The Corporation could not act alone against the intransigence of the Board of Trade (and probably the continuing opposition of the N.C.B.). When the Corporation at last gained substantive responsibilities in the industrial sphere in 1958 it did, however, encounter severe difficulties in attracting new industry - especially industry offering male employment.

(1) The considerable reduction of expenditure on estate factories in the Development Areas after 1949 is documented in A.J. Odber, 1965; Table 8, p.406. In the early 1950s this expenditure had fallen, in real terms, to about 20% of expenditure in the peak year, 1947-8. In 1957-8, expenditure on estate factories was a mere 13% of 1947-8 expenditure.

3. The Second Phase: 1958-71

3.1 A re-appraisal for coal and the revival of regional policy

In 1958 the Ministry of Housing and Local Government granted permission to the Corporation to build factories to let, financed by Treasury loans through the provisions of the New Towns Act. This decision may partly have resulted from the Corporation's persistent lobbying, its case now strengthened by the N.E.T.E.'s inability to finance new factory building. But it also seems likely that the Ministry was aware that the N.C.B. was preparing plans which would entail a considerable reduction in manpower, with the result that new male-employing industry at Peterlee was soon to become a vital requirement if the New Town was to develop successfully.

During the first decade of Nationalization, high demand for coal had meant that there had been only a limited contraction in the mining labour force, stemming largely from the effects of mechanisation. Only six collieries in County Durham closed during this period and east Durham had witnessed only a modest reduction in colliery manpower.⁽¹⁾ But after 1957 demand from both home and overseas markets declined; domestic decline being mainly due to the increasing use of oil as an energy source, a development actively supported by Central Government fuel policy. The challenge of cheap oil was met by the N.C.B.'s attempt to increase the competitiveness of coal by concentrating production at the most efficient, lowest-cost collieries and coalfields, a strategy which formed the basis of the N.C.B.'s Revised Plan for Coal, published in 1959. The Revised Plan anticipated a reduction in output from the Durham coalfield, a policy which was to mean the closure of scores of high cost,

(1) In 1949, 18,900 men were employed at the ten collieries in Easington R.D., compared with 17,800 in 1957 (see also Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Colliery Manpower in Easington R.D., 1949-74.

Colliery	1949	1960	1970	1974	N.C.B.'s 1949 estimates for 1971
Horden	3,900	3,172	1,975	1,984	3,100
Easington	2,800	2,752	2,447	2,620	2,800
Blackhall	2,500	2,047	1,709	1,359	2,000
South Hetton	1,200	953	609	562	1,000
Murton	2,800	2,303	1,506	1,485	2,300
Shotton	1,800	1,128	783	closed 1972	1,800
Thornley	1,400	1,340	closed 1970		1,400
Wheatley Hill	1,000	849	closed 1968		closed
Deaf Hill	600	593	closed 1967		400
Wingate Grange	900	675	closed 1962		700
Total	18,900	15,812	9,029	8,010	15,500

Sources: 1949 figures and N.C.B. forecast for 1971 from Peterlee-Social and Economic Research, P.D.C., 1950, p.129.
 1960 and 1970 figures from The Colliery Year Book.
 1974 figures from Guide to the Coalfields, 1977 edn.

Murton figure excludes men working from Eppleton and Hawthorn pits which, together with Murton, now forms the Hawthorn Combined Mine. In 1974 Eppleton employed 1,338 men and Hawthorn 145 men.

undercapitalised pits in the 1960s. In future, production was to be concentrated at the coastal collieries - but, nonetheless, east Durham was also expected to experience considerable decline in mining employment.

It is evidence of the lack of co-operation between the Corporation and the N.C.B. on economic planning that even in 1958, a Corporation report on industrial policy for Peterlee⁽¹⁾ still had to be based on the self-evidently unrealistic local manpower estimates supplied by the N.C.B. in 1949. The Corporation's report argued that 4,950 male and 5,600 female jobs should be provided, principally at Peterlee, by 1971. However, in 1959 the N.C.B. released new estimates based on the Revised Plan, suggesting the loss of nearly 4,000 mining jobs between 1958 and 1971 - whereas the 1949 estimates had predicted a reduction of only 1,700 jobs in that period. Hence, in a further report⁽²⁾ the Corporation set a new target to provide 7,680 new jobs for men and 5,600 for women by 1971. In fact, employment decline was to amount to twice the figure given by the N.C.B. in 1959, while the Corporation's objectives proved hopelessly idealistic and incapable of being realised.

The decision enabling the Corporation to build factories still left it with very limited abilities to attract firms. The Corporation could only build for specific firms; it was not empowered to build "advance" factories which, the Corporation pointed out, would provide "an incentive which at the moment is lacking".⁽³⁾ This meant that firms coming to Peterlee would have to accept long delays while their factory was being built and that some firms might rather prefer to

(1) Peterlee-Industry, 1958, in P.D.C. File AR4.

(2) Peterlee Industry: Addendum Report, 1959, in P.D.C. File AR4. In both cases Corporation employment creation targets assumed the retention of natural population increase and aimed to achieve the same female activity rate as the N.E. Development Area (28% of the female population aged 15 and over in 1955).

(3) Peterlee Development Corporation, Annual Report, 1958.

CONCERN OVER

PETERLEE

Echo 3.4.62.

'FAILURE'

Concern at the continuing failure of Peterlee to attract industry was expressed at the monthly meeting of Haswell Labour Party. A recent report stated that a new factory to employ 5,000 males had been lost to the new town and would probably be established at Ferryhill.

The secretary, Mr. J. D. Dormand, said that one of the most important reasons for building Peterlee had been to provide alternative work for redundant and disabled miners. The new town had failed in this respect but people would still be forced to live in Peterlee, in many cases against their wishes.

It was agreed that Peterlee Development Corporation should be asked for information on the question of industries.

Bid to attract new industries to Peterlee

PETERLEE Development Corporation is to build small factory units for letting in an effort to attract industry to the town.

This was revealed by Mr. Ken Allan, assistant to the Corporation's general manager, when questioned on the annual report issued by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

The report stated that industry was flourishing in new towns, except for Peterlee. Although Peterlee Development Corporation had received a number of promising inquiries from industrial firms, none of them had made up their minds yet where they would go.

By the end of 1961 Peterlee had almost 4,000 houses completed, and there were 58 shops. Capital advances for the new town totalled £9,600,000.

Mr. Allan told *The Northern Echo*: "The Corporation is most anxious to attract new industry into the town. We work with the Board of Trade and the North-East Industrial Development Council. This problem does not only affect Peterlee—it affects the North as a whole."

PETERLEE NEGLECTED BY BOARD

SUGGESTING that Peterlee had been persistently neglected, Mr. Emanuel Shinwell, Socialist M.P. for Easington, asked in the House of Commons yesterday: "Is the Board of Trade going to do anything for us and if not, why don't they tell us, and not deceive us in this manner?"

Mr. Niall Macpherson, Parliamentary Secretary, Board of Trade, said there was no question of deception. The Board brought to the attention of firms considering settling in the county the facilities offered

OF TRADE, SAYS M.P.

Sunderland Echo 18.4.62
for development in County Durham, including Peterlee. He could not say why a particular firm decided to go to one area, rather than another.

Mr. Shinwell had asked the President of the Board of Trade why an industrial firm whose original intention was to pro-

mote development of its undertaking and employ several thousand men in Peterlee decided to switch to another part of County Durham, to what extent his department was consulted, and what advice it gave to the firm.

He also asked the President what measures he had taken to encourage industrial firms to use the facilities of Peterlee for industrial development.

"FRUSTRATED"

Referring to the industry that had decided to move to another part of the county, Mr. Shinwell asked if there was any reason why the hopes of the citizens of Peterlee should have been frustrated by this switch. "Whose advice did the Board take in these matters," he asked.

Mr. Macpherson said that the Board normally showed more than one site to a company or applicant. It was then up to the company to decide.

Plate 24. Peterlee's failure to attract new industry. (*Northern Echo*, 3.4.62. and *Sunderland Echo*, 5.6.62., 18.4.62.)

move to an empty factory available on a N.E.T.E. estate. The Corporation's promotional efforts were also unimpressive and it remained largely dependent upon the Board of Trade passing on industrialist's enquiries. Additionally, the Peterlee industrial estate, with its questionable stability and poor road access, was not attractive to industry.

However, in 1959 the Corporation did get the opportunity to exercise its new powers. A Norwegian businessman, Commander Waage, approached the Corporation for assistance in establishing a factory producing "wood wool" blocks for use in the construction industry. The Corporation undertook to build a factory for Waage Wood Wool Ltd. and the Board of Trade provided additional financial assistance. This development, which would initially create a small number of jobs for men and which also appeared to have good prospects for growth in the future, was hailed as "the new town's success story of the year" (headline, Northern Daily Mail, 23.12.59). But by 1962 the firm still employed only 20 men, it was heavily in debt and eventually a receiver was appointed to liquidate this once-promising concern. Apparently, the collapse of Milton Hindle Ltd., formerly a major user of wood wool blocks, largely contributed to the failure of Waage.⁽¹⁾

By contrast, Tudor Food Products Ltd., which came to Peterlee in 1960, has been highly successful and soon became the town's largest single employer, a position which it has maintained. By 1976 this firm, which is mainly engaged in the manufacture of potato crisps, employed 788 workers; 345 of these jobs were held by men, making

(1) It does seem that New Towns, especially in the Development Areas, have tended to attract "promising" enterprises which later turn out to be undercapitalised and/or prove not to be viable. Thomas' account of the "Cadco episode" at Glenrothes provides a particularly interesting example of this. In that case Glenrothes Corporation was so anxious to secure a promised 2,000 jobs at the proposed Cadco piggeries/sausage factory that it failed to discover that Cadco was almost without capital resources. The episode turned out to be "a south sea bubble" and is unusually well-documented in a Board of Trade investigation upon which Thomas' account is based (Thomas, 1969b, pp. 935-8).

Tudor also Peterlee's largest male employer. Fortunately for Tudor and Peterlee, crisp manufacture proved to be a growth industry - consumption has increased considerably in recent years - and Tudor, a subsidiary of the Smith's Group (and ultimately part of the General Mills Corporation of the U.S.A.) now serves a large part of the regional market.

The arrival of Tudor, and the fact that this was not followed by an influx of other firms, may partly be linked to changes in regional policy in the early 1960s. The Development Area legislation, which had virtually fallen into disuse by the mid-1950s, was replaced by the 1960 Local Employment Act which was intended to channel assistance (grants, loans, factories) more selectively to "Development Districts". These new Districts were chosen on the basis of unemployment; an Employment Exchange Area (E.E.A.) was given Development District status if its total (male and female) unemployment rate exceeded $4\frac{1}{2}\%$. Horden E.E.A., which included Peterlee, just reached the arbitrary qualifying rate and was thus among the first Development Districts. This gave Peterlee an advantage over many other areas in the region and may well have helped the Corporation to attract Tudor. However, this advantage was short-lived, since colliery closures and economic recession brought Development District status to more and more areas. By mid-1963 almost every E.E.A. in the North-East had been declared a Development District.

During this period the Corporation increased its efforts to attract industry by publicity campaigns. In 1962 T. Dan Smith Associates was engaged to undertake public relations and promotional work, but the Corporation continued to receive few inquiries from industrialists. With the demise of Waage, Peterlee's industrial estate contained only three factories, providing employment for approximately 1,000 women and 200 men in 1963, while the first local colliery closure (Wingate Grange, in 1962) had taken place and

several more were expected to follow. Peterlee and the rest of the region was experiencing increasing unemployment and future prospects were, to say the least, gloomy. But during 1963 Central Government responded with the appointment of Lord Hailsham as Minister with special responsibility for the North-East. The subsequent "Hailsham Plan", represented a partial revival for the idea of regional planning and also recognised new economic objectives for Peterlee - although Peterlee was to experience another decade of limited industrial development.

3.2 The Hailsham "era", 1963-67.

The appointment of Lord Hailsham gave the Corporation the opportunity to discuss the problems which, they believed, were frustrating their efforts to bring new industry to Peterlee.⁽¹⁾ Firstly, it was argued that Peterlee required further sites for industry and it was important that there should be no doubt concerning their stability. And, secondly, the Corporation complained of inferior communication links and impressed upon the Minister the need to improve the standard of the A19 road. Hailsham's Plan, The North East: A programme for regional development and growth,⁽²⁾ responded to both of the problems which the Corporation had identified. The reconstruction of the A19 was included as part of a large-scale road programme and 90 acres of land to the west of the A19 were to be added to Peterlee's designated area, providing large, stable industrial sites.

Both of these proposals took time to implement; the additional industrial land was designated in 1966 and then had to be drained

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- (1) Lord Hailsham visited Peterlee during 1963. His visit and contribution to Peterlee in the subsequent plan are recalled in the naming of "Hailsham Place" in the town centre.
 - (2) Secretary of State for Industry, Trade and Regional Development; Cmd. 2206, 1963.

and serviced, while improvements to the A19 were only finally completed in the early 1970s. Certainly, these long overdue projects considerably enhanced Peterlee's attraction as a location for industry, but by the time they were able to make an impact another Hailsham proposal had negated Peterlee's new competitive advantages. Hailsham had suggested the establishment of another New Town at Washington, about 12 miles north-west of Peterlee. Designated in 1964, Washington proved highly attractive to new industry and it is clear that, especially in the period 1967-71, many new firms moved into Washington which might otherwise have gone to Peterlee.

Aside from the concrete proposals of the Hailsham Plan, the results of which were somewhat contradictory for Peterlee, the Plan also contained important statements of policy. Peterlee was explicitly recognised, for the first time by Central Government, as a potentially major industrial centre. Tyneside, east Durham and Teesside were considered to constitute the region's "growth zone", within which industrial development and reconstruction efforts should primarily be concentrated. Peterlee was expected to make a significant contribution to the realization of this strategy in east Durham and the New Towns were generally regarded as examples of economic, social and environmental modernisation which other parts of the region would do well to emulate.

A concern to "modernise" the region - its industry, infrastructure and styles of life - formed the basis of the Hailsham Plan, pervading almost every paragraph. It can be argued that it was this concern, expressed in the jargon of the new regional planning, which was Hailsham's most significant contribution, and which makes it possible to talk of the Hailsham "era", elements of which are still clearly discernible in the 1970s. Certainly Hailsham's ideas, well

summarised by the notion that the North-East must seek to throw off its "Andy Capp" image in order to be attractive to industrialists, found support amongst the region's planners, administrators and politicians. The views of T. Dan Smith may be considered an extension of Hailsham's ideas, while it is clear that the wide acceptance of Smith's ambitious - even visionary - proposals owes much to the groundwork laid by Hailsham in 1963.

Peterlee had a little more success in attracting new firms during the period 1963-7. In 1964 the Corporation began to build workshop units which were tenanted by small businesses or used as temporary accommodation while a larger factory was being built. One of these firms, W.S. McGregor Ltd., subsequently expanded considerably, but several others stayed only temporarily. Some moved elsewhere, some failed to become viable and at least two firms, Clover and Precision Engineering, ultimately went into liquidation (see Table 4.1). However, Peterlee did gain three relatively large factories engaged in the clothing industry - I.J. Dewhirst, Clix and Charnos - although the majority of their employees were women. By 1967, Peterlee's manufacturing industry provided 1,600 female and over 800 male jobs, an addition of about 1200 jobs over a four year period. This was no doubt a source of some satisfaction to the Corporation - especially since it had yet to reap the benefits of the Hailsham Plan - and there is evidence of this in the new-found confidence of the Corporation's Annual Reports. Using the contemporary jargon of regional planning, the 1967 Report stated that

"The Corporation directs attention to Peterlee's position as the acknowledged growth point of population and industry within the East Durham sub-region and believes that it is making an important contribution to the new diversified economy in the north-east; the New Town is a demonstration of the viability of social and economic investment converging upon a pre-determined point of growth."

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The prospects of further industrial development appeared to be far better than in the past. Peterlee enjoyed Development Area status⁽¹⁾ and, in 1966, had been permitted to build its first advance factory. New industrial sites were becoming available and work had begun on improvements to the A19 road. But at the end of 1967, Peterlee's position of priority and attractiveness to industry in comparison with other locations was removed by the designation of Special Development Areas (S.D.A.'s).

S.D.A.'s were introduced in an attempt to combat high unemployment in areas affected by colliery closure. The designation of an Employment Exchange Area as an S.D.A. meant that a firm moving there could be provided with a factory for which no rent would have to be paid for five years (ordinary Development Areas could offer a two-year rent-free period) and could also take advantage of operational grants and increased investment grants. Several Employment Exchange Areas in western and central Durham, all of which suffered pit closures in the mid-1960s, were immediately accorded S.D.A. status in 1967, thus giving them a large degree of priority above neighbouring areas.⁽²⁾ Peterlee and its surrounding area was excluded because it had not recently experienced major colliery closures. Unfortunately for Peterlee, part of the industrial area at Washington fortuitously gained S.D.A. status, thus further strengthening the competitive advantage that Washington already had over Peterlee.⁽³⁾

Peterlee's attempts to obtain new industry were again frustrated.

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- (1) New "Development Areas" were introduced by the 1966 Local Employment Act, replacing the existing Development Districts.
 - (2) 47 S.D.A.'s were initially declared in 1967. Those in County Durham included Consett, Crook, Spennymoor, Stanley, Bishop Auckland, Durham, Houghton-le-Spring and Chester-le-Street.
 - (3) The Corporation Board Minutes for July 1970 noted that one firm, Steel Cords Ltd., would have moved to Peterlee had S.D.A. incentives been available; it was reported that the firm was now considering Washington.

Its problems were then multiplied when the long-anticipated colliery closures took place. In 1968 Wheatley Hill closed, followed by Thornley in 1970 and Shotton in 1972. Many of the men leaving these collieries took advantage of N.C.B. schemes and transferred to other coalfields while others, particularly those aged over 55 and not eligible for redeployment, joined the ranks of the unemployed. Peterlee was clearly unable to absorb this "surplus labour", with the result that the male unemployment rate for South-East Durham rose steadily from 5% in 1967 to more than 10% by 1972 (Fig. 4.2).

Several informants have stressed that Peterlee's exclusion from the S.D.A. schedule was a serious handicap. In the Annual Report for 1970, the Corporation declared that

"... despite the environmental advantages that can be offered by establishment in the New Town it will be clearly seen that these do not outweigh the greater financial inducements afforded to an industrialist moving into an area designated as a Special Development Area. The Corporation respectfully points out that whilst it has to operate with this disadvantage there is little prospect, in the immediate future, of any improvement in the local unemployment situation."

Peterlee was at last given S.D.A. status in 1971 but this provided no opportunity to respond to the problem of 400 redundancies following the closure of Shotton colliery in 1972. In the intervening period, 1968-70, the Corporation had, however, attempted to find a way out of its dilemma with a proposal for a Science Centre at Peterlee. This scheme and its chief supporter, T. Dan Smith, added a remarkable - if fruitless - interlude to Peterlee's development history.

3.3 T. Dan Smith and the Science Centre proposal

Mr. T. Dan Smith, a Newcastle city councillor and the region's most prominent politician in the 1960s,⁽¹⁾ was appointed chairman of

(1) For an assessment of Smith at the height of his political career see "The Boss Men" in Turner's The North Country, 1967.

Peterlee Development Corporation in 1968. Prior to his appointment, Smith had already been involved with Peterlee; from 1962 to 1968 one of his public relations firms, T. Dan Smith Associates, had been engaged by the Corporation to promote Peterlee to industrialists and handle press relations.⁽¹⁾

As chairman of the Northern Economic Planning Council, Smith had repeatedly argued the case for technological change as a means to revive and diversify the region's industrial composition, a viewpoint most fully developed in the major N.E.P.C. document Challenge of the Changing North (1966). And stemming from this concern with technological change, came the awareness that the region was deficient in the field of research and development. The North did not generate new technologies; it was dependent upon firms setting up branch plants in the region, introducing new processes and products developed elsewhere. Far better, it was argued, for the region itself to produce new ideas which then might give birth to new growth industries within the region. Arising from this view, which was backed by the Government's concern to instigate a "white-hot technological revolution", there emerged the Peterlee Science Centre scheme.

During 1967, Smith and A.V. Williams, Peterlee's General Manager, proposed the establishment of a Science Centre or campus, comprising research and development institutes and linked to "high technology" manufacturing industry, suggesting that this could best be developed at Peterlee. Williams was quick to point out that the Oakerside area of Peterlee, overlooking Castle Eden Dene, would provide an ideal site

(1) Smith's P.R. work for Peterlee is discussed in detail in N.E.A.S. W.P. 22 (Robinson, 1975b), pp. 54-7.

Research centre is key to prosperity

THE Board of the Peterlee Development Corporation, including the dynamic general manager, Mr. A. V. Williams, believe that the new town could be within sight of a breakthrough in industrial planning which could alter the whole conception of the town's future.

The idea, which is growing, and which has been carefully documented and argued out in private, is that the town should become the host to a Regional Research and Development Centre for Industry and that this should result in the necessary attraction to the town of, first a science based community which would operate the centre, and then a group of science orientated industries which would benefit from the research on its doorstep.

At the moment the town provides employment for about 3,000 people of whom about one-third are men. Further industries employing predominantly female labour are not really required since they would only result in competition for labour which is and will remain strictly limited.

Growth

So how best to attract science based industries employing men which will be as relevant in the early decades of the 21st Century as they are likely to be in the 1970's?

How, ponder the

By HARRY THOMPSON

planners, does Peterlee, for instance, become a base, albeit a secondary one, for the electronics industry, attracting not one such factory but perhaps six or seven?

How to bring more of the plastics, chemicals, and packaging growth industries to Peterlee?

The Peterlee planners argue that if they simply go out in competition with the development areas their chances of a really booming success may not be very great.

Triangle

But if they have a remarkable incentive like a fully established Industrial Research and Development Centre linked, perhaps, to the most modern chain of computers, then the sort of industry needed would have compelling reasons for coming to Peterlee.

The Peterlee idea, if it could reach fruition, would be unique to this country; the only comparable venture (and the one on which the Peterlee idea is based) is what is known as the "research

triangle" in North Carolina, in the USA.

Here a massive research institute which provides the most diverse services to industry, government, and private foundations, has been established within the triangle comprising three universities.

This research complex has not only attracted a formidable concentration of scientific talent but many large factories of the high technology variety.

This has resulted in the State of North Carolina making a contribution in the field of electronics which is world famous.

It is the idea of far-seeing people at Peterlee that the North-East should embark upon a venture of this kind with Peterlee as the focal point.

Heritage

They point out that Peterlee is within easy access of the Universities of Newcastle and Durham and the impressive techno-

logical resources of Teesside.

They claim that the environment they are creating within the town, and the centre for the arts and humanities, which they propose to set up, will provide the proper atmosphere and cultural heritage for the scientists, technologists, engineers and their families who, through the research and computing centre and all the industry that will be grouped around it, would be attracted to Peterlee.

They claim that they have the sites at Oakerside and in that vicinity which would be ideal for the Research and Development Centre, and they have the nearby land for the development of the factories that would assure adequate male employment for decades to come.

It is believed that the establishment of the Research and Development Centre (benefiting from the North Carolina experience) would be the first priority and that, however much it may be directly financed by industry eventually, would have to be totally supported at the outset.

How would this be achieved? British universities, by comparison with their American counterparts, are so penurious that the possibility of

real financial aid from the Universities of Newcastle and Durham would be out of the question—so what about the Government?

In the present economic circumstances it is highly unlikely that the government would contemplate a revolutionary project such as Peterlee might propose.

It is in the attracting of the necessary finance for this venture from private sources that the great problem lies. But the idea will not likely be discarded and the Corporation consider that once the centre was started its attractions to industrial technology would ensure its success. Ultimately the direct research it would be able to do for industry would make it economically viable in its own right.

But viability would not be the first aim. This aim would be to improve the economy of the town of Peterlee and with it the economic image of the whole North East.

Plate 25. Science Centre Plan.

(The Journal, 24.4.68.)

and one advantage of the Peterlee suggestion was that it avoided rivalry between Tyneside and Teesside. Support was successfully canvassed and in 1968 Smith was appointed Corporation chairman largely, it is thought, in order to enable him to carry out the proposal.

Detailed discussions on the scheme commenced at the second Corporation Board meeting chaired by Smith and the Science Centre project continued to have a prominent place on the Board's agenda for many months. A Science Centre Advisory Committee, which included Smith, Williams and various industrialists, academics and regional personalities, was convened. Feasibility studies were initiated and Smith and Williams toured Science Parks in the U.S.A., returning impressed with the example of the North Carolina Research Triangle, which now served as a model for the Peterlee project. Smith effectively promoted the project in Whitehall⁽¹⁾ and by 1969 Government approval "in principle" had been granted.

To the Corporation, the Science Centre idea had several compelling attractions. It provided Peterlee with a new *raison d'être* now that it was clear that Peterlee could no longer function merely as a miners' town. The notion of Peterlee at the vanguard of technological progress, accommodating "a colony of top boffins" must have seemed very appealing to Smith and Williams. Although initially most of the jobs provided by the Centre would be for scientists brought in from elsewhere, limited service employment was anticipated. Handicapped by not having been granted S.D.A. status it might have appeared logical to step aside from this impasse and concentrate on this long-term venture. Ultimately, it was believed,

(1) Smith discusses these promotional efforts in "Peterlee", ch. 13 of his autobiography (1970).

new factories would be set up in Peterlee to use the technologies developed in the research institutes, thus solving the town's industrial development problems; the Science Centre would make Peterlee irresistably attractive to new firms and the town would be immune to the vagaries of regional policy. And finally, the publicity-conscious Corporation saw this as a great opportunity to put Peterlee, most decisively, "on the map". The Annual Reports and the Corporation's promotional literature of the period demonstrate the spirit of imagination and excitement accompanying the proposal. A.V. Williams wrote:

"Technology is the key to competitiveness in the age of the electronic computer.... if the north is to realise its potential as the region of the future, it must concentrate upon the development of research and technology and, by the attractions of environment, encourage both national and foreign industries to settle in the region. (1)

The Corporation also added a proposal for an "Arts and Humanities Centre" which, by providing a wide range of sports, arts and social facilities would serve as an "analogue" to the Science Centre and offer recreational opportunities for the scientists (see ch. V, section 4.4).

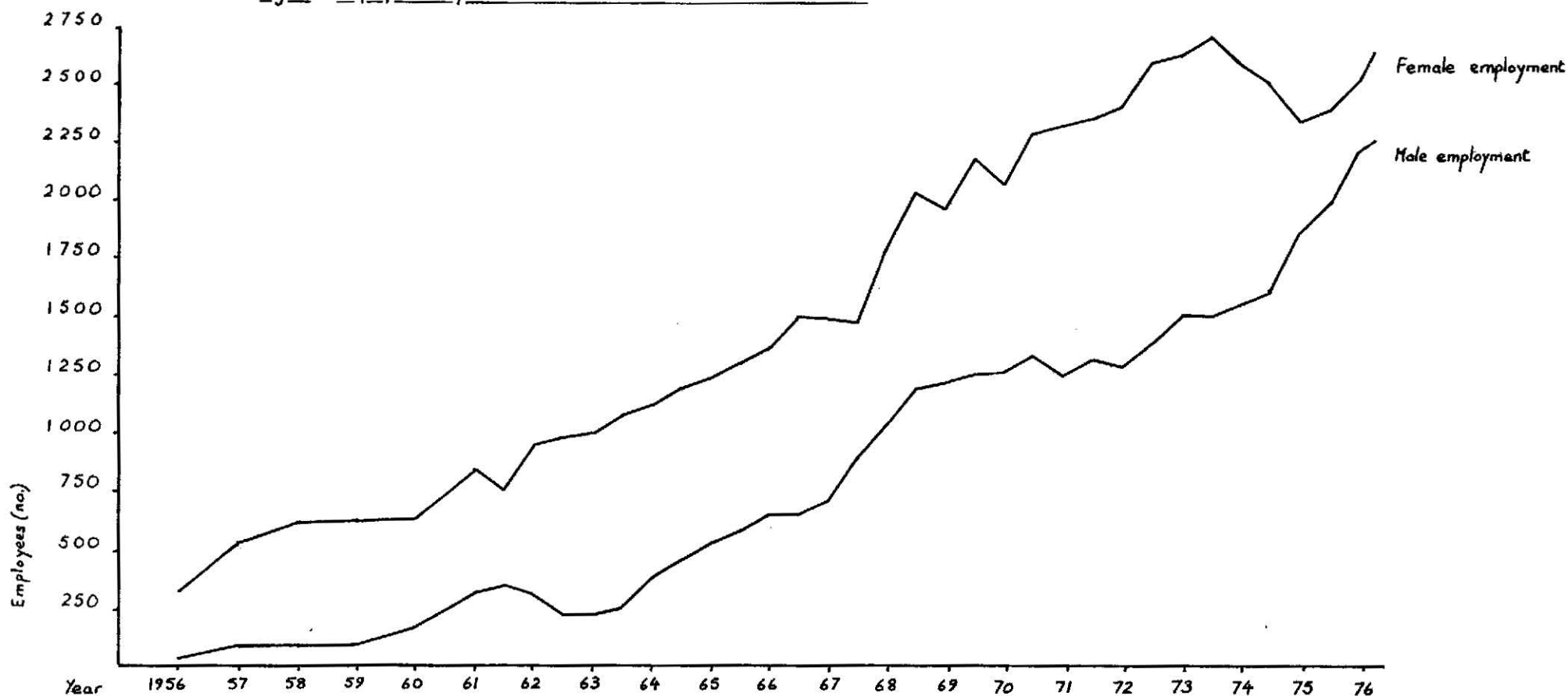
In the event, the whole proposal turned into a dismal, somewhat embarrassing, failure. During 1969 I.B.M. Ltd. established a small-scale base close to Peterlee town centre but awaited the arrival of other research firms before it would be prepared to expand and move to the Oakerside site. Additional firms did not arrive⁽²⁾ and I.B.M.

(1) A.V. Williams, Peterlee and the New Technology, P.D.C., May 1969.

(2) The only other research firm to come to Peterlee was Economic Models Ltd., located in offices in the town centre. But the arrival of this firm was not directly a part of the Science Centre project (as implied in the article in Plate 26); it was engaged to promote the project and undertake studies related to it for the Corporation. The Corporation contract was terminated in 1975 and Economic Models left Peterlee.

continues (in 1977) to operate on a limited scale, employing only about 30 technicians. The Corporation hired consultants to publicise the project, the Science Centre Advisory Committee remained active and a service road was laid at Oakerside in anticipation of the setting up of research firms. But the project came to nothing. Smith withdrew from the chairmanship in February 1970 but a measure of interest in the idea was maintained at least until the retirement of Williams in 1974. From time to time attempts were made, without success, to seek the re-location of Government research departments in Peterlee and at one point the establishment of a Centre for Regional Studies was suggested. Even after 1974, the Corporation was reluctant to entirely abandon the scheme and opposed suggestions, notably from the Ministry, that Oakerside be used for housing purposes. Finally, in 1977, the Corporation declared that the whole idea had been "a public relations gimmick" (see Plate 26). Consequently, this relic - and unfortunate reminder - of the T. Dan Smith "era" at Peterlee has, at last, been removed.

Fig. 4.1 Employment provision at Peterlee's industrial estates.



Sources: 1956-60; P.D.C. File AP27.

1961-76; P.D.C. Central Policy Unit

Note: These data include some service firms, maintenance depots etc. on the industrial estates. Hence, these figures differ slightly from those quoted for manufacturing industry, given in the text and in Table 4.2.

Fig. 4.2 Male unemployment, South-East Durham and Great Britain.



Note: South-East Durham comprises Peterlee & Easington and Wingate Local Employment Offices (incorporating former Horden, Haswell and Easington [Youth Employment] Offices).

Source: Department of Employment returns.

Peterlee's boffin bubble bursts



The Science City site at Peterlee between Sunny Blunts and the "road which leads to nowhere."

Peterlee Development Corporation today admitted that plans to make the new town the Science City of the North were a public relations gimmick and an unrealistic proposition.

The revelation comes almost ten years after the multi-million pound project was launched amid a blaze of national publicity by the then chairman, Mr T. Dan Smith, and former general manager, Mr A. V. Williams.

Though a Science Centre Advisory Committee was set up and the scheme won Government approval in 1969, only two research-and-development-based companies have ever moved into the new town — I.B.M. and Economic Models Ltd.

Economic Models an international business consultancy and research company moved into small town-centre offices in 1970, — but pulled out five years later. A spokesman at the time said the non-development of the Science City was one of the reasons for the move.

I.B.M. had already set up a temporary unit in the new town in 1969 expecting to move into the complex planned for a special site.

Now there are reports that it, too, is considering leaving Peterlee, though a spokesman has denied there are plans to pull out at present.

A 200-acre site was earmarked for a Science Park at Oakerside and apart from attracting

SCIENCE CITY OF NORTH 'A GIMMICK'

research-and-technology-based industries the Development Corporation won the backing of two major universities — Durham and Newcastle.

The scheme was based on a similar complex in North Carolina and Mr Williams and Mr Smith visited America on study tours at that time.

Advertisements and colour brochures heralded Peterlee's "Challenge to the changing North" and the possibility of hundreds of jobs. One included the following statement:

"In the Peterlee Science Park highly qualified men and women from industry, government establishments and the universities will be able to carry out research and development projects in the forefront of modern technology.

"In particular the best brains in international companies will have an opportunity to do work of crucial importance in an intellectual and cultural environment that will largely be of their own making."

Now, however, the Development Corporation — headed by a new chairman, new Board, and different chief officers — has burst the bubble.



MR DAN SMITH

"The Science City plan never was a realistic proposition but a public relations gimmick," said Mr Leslie Cole, public relations officer, today.

"I don't think it set out to be a 'con' but it was a good idea that had no basis in fact.

"The reality is that it is still possible to attract technological industries to Peterlee — but not to the extent it was felt by the Corporation a few years ago.

"We still hope to attract that kind of research and development industry but there is no way Peterlee can become the Science Centre of the North.

"The idea was oversold but that isn't the way the Corporation works today. We do not like to raise false hopes and we are not going to pretend the unattainable is attainable."

Mr Cole said continued research and development depends on a healthy economy and suffers when this is weak. The Development Corporation's current policy for promoting Peterlee is now based on honesty and realism," he said.

The current Chairman is Mr Dennis Stevenson and Mr Garry Phillipson is manager.

"There has been a change in the way in which Peterlee is 'sold' and publicized and we feel our approach is far more honest," said Mr Cole.

"We don't want to raise any false hopes for the people of Peterlee or the North."

Plate 26.
Science Centre "gimmick".

(Sunderland Echo, 17.5.77.)

4. The Third Phase: 1971-77

While the Corporation's attention and efforts were concentrated on the Science Centre proposal and while the New Town suffered from the handicap of exclusion from S.D.A. designation, little was achieved in attracting new firms to Peterlee. According to the Corporation's Annual Reports, only 205 male and 255 female jobs in manufacturing were added between March 1969 and March 1971, giving a total of nearly 1,400 jobs for men and 2,250 for women. The only important and lasting benefit to result from the Science Centre proposal was the addition of a further 300 acres of industrial land to the west of the A19, designated in 1970. This extension, first proposed by the Corporation in 1968, had been justified and granted on the grounds that the new "high technology" industry would need large sites because it operated with a high ratio of floorspace to employees.

1971 marked a turning point for the Corporation, although practical results followed later. In February 1971 the Government announced the inclusion of additional Employment Exchange Areas within the S.D.A. schedule and the Peterlee and Wingate E.E.A.'s were finally granted this status. Furthermore, a younger and more vigorous chairman, H.D. Stevenson, was appointed to replace Smith. With the completion of improvements to the A19, no shortage of industrial sites and a continuing advance factory programme, Peterlee now seemed set for substantial progress in industrial development.

However, the local unemployment situation deteriorated with the closure of Shotton Colliery in 1972, entailing the disappearance of 780 local jobs and the redundancy of more than 400 men. The impact of this closure on Peterlee was considerable, not least because it came at a time of mounting unemployment. In the previous year the number of male manufacturing jobs at Peterlee

actually declined by almost 100, mainly owing to the liquidation of Precision Engineering Co. and Thruster Marine Ltd. In October 1973, the capital-intensive and experimental British Ropes plant also closed; earlier hopes of expansion were dashed and about 80 men declared redundant. Male unemployment reached a peak of 12.2% in the S.E. Durham area in September 1972 and throughout almost the whole of the period 1968-74 the local male unemployment rate was more than twice the national rate (see Fig. 4.2). In addition, from 1968 to the present (September 1977) S.E. Durham has consistently recorded higher rates of male unemployment than the Northern Region as a whole.

In recent years the Corporation has considerably increased its efforts to attract firms to Peterlee. Major emphasis is placed on promotional activities, together with attempts to identify and then negotiate with firms who might be induced to set up a plant in Peterlee. Conscious of a widespread ignorance of Peterlee in Britain, the Corporation has engaged in a series of "name awareness" exercises; the slogan "Peterlee is the Place to Be" has been heard on London commercial radio and has been emblazoned on London buses. The Corporation has become increasingly concerned to attract overseas firms; the chairman has made several promotional visits to Japan, North America and Europe and publicity material in the Japanese language has been prepared. In conjunction with Washington Development Corporation an office promoting the North-East's three New Towns has been opened in London's World Trade Centre. The Corporation's industrial development team has been expanded and strengthened and, in the future, following the transfer of housing to the District Council, the Corporation's main role will be that of an industrial development agency.

The Corporation's more vigorous approach to industrial promotion has, no doubt, helped to attract new firms, especially now that there is substantial competition within the region for a small and diminishing number of firms able and willing to locate there. But the advantages of establishing an industrial concern in Peterlee are also much greater than they were a few years ago. Advance factory accommodation is available, now rent-free for up to five years. The level of financial incentives available under the S.D.A. schedule is as high as anywhere in Great Britain. And the Corporation is able to advise and assist industrialists - arranging, for example, housing for nominated key workers. Communications are adequate - although the Corporation considers that a link road to the A1(M) is needed - and the labour force is variously described by the Corporation as "adaptable", "conscientious" and "hard working". Certainly it is the case that with a male unemployment rate above 10% and female unemployment currently at a similarly high level,⁽¹⁾ labour has a weak bargaining position (with the exception of certain skilled workers).

All these factors helped to improve Peterlee's industrial development performance in the period after 1971. Several new firms have moved in, most of them engaged in engineering, their products ranging from dumper trucks (D.J.B. Engineering Ltd.) to ball-bearings (N.S.K. and Rothe Erde). The last-named, incidentally, was one of the first local recipients of assistance from the E.E.C. Regional Fund. Between 1971 and 1976 manufacturing industry at Peterlee has provided an additional 900 jobs, largely resulting from

(1) Over the last two years female unemployment has increased dramatically, from 4.1% in March 1975 to 12.1% in September 1977 (Female rates are, however, notoriously unreliable owing to discrepancies between "the unemployed" and those registered at the Exchange).

the arrival of these new firms. They are predominantly male-employing; even so, by 1976 only 43% of Peterlee's manufacturing jobs were for men, a slight improvement on the figure of 38% in 1971. Several are in the early stages of development and expect to expand their labour forces; Weiser, for instance, employing 49 people in September 1976 anticipates an ultimate labour force of 700. But such expectations are sometimes not realised. Archer Components, which came to Peterlee in 1973, informed the Corporation that it would eventually employ 750⁽¹⁾ but, together with D.J.B. which took it over in 1975, currently employs only one-third of that total.

Bearing in mind the reluctance of firms to undertake capital investment during a period of economic recession and, in the context of Peterlee's past record, these recent successes in attracting new industry are impressive. But they have been insufficient to halt the upward trend in unemployment. The incoming firms have mainly been relatively capital-intensive, with the result that employment creation has been small in relation to investment. Moreover, they have largely required young, skilled workers, thus making little impact on a dole queue comprising large numbers of unskilled and older workers.⁽²⁾ In addition, substantial labour shedding in surrounding areas - notably Sunderland - has increased unemployment in the Peterlee sub-region, which is highly dependent upon jobs provided in these areas.

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- (1) "In the initial development the Company estimated that the employment potential would be 750; first year 100 rising to 200 in the second year, 350 in the third year and thereafter to 750". Extract from P.D.C. Board minutes, May 1972.
- (2) One informant said that a new engineering firm in Peterlee would not take on men aged over 35. Department of Employment analyses (for March 1977) classify nearly two-thirds of unemployed men registered at the Peterlee and Wingate Exchanges as "miscellaneous - mainly general labourers"

The next section looks a little more closely at Peterlee's industrial structure and the pattern of employment opportunities. For the moment we stress the point that Peterlee and its sub-region has not recovered from the effects of contraction in the coal industry and such a recovery, if indeed it does take place, seems far in the future. The Corporation's continued efforts to attract branch plants of multi-national companies, together with regional policy incentives which tend to attract capital-intensive operations, appear unlikely to secure substantial numbers of jobs for predominantly unskilled men who, in the past, would have found employment in mining. It is true, as we pointed out earlier,⁽¹⁾ that Peterlee has a high proportion of skilled men, but they do not have as great a difficulty in finding work as do the unskilled. In terms of the area's formidable unemployment problems, it is not so much that Peterlee has failed to attract male-employing firms; it is rather that it has not attracted firms able to provide work for the unskilled core of the unemployed. With regard to the provision of female employment, there seem to be similar problems in that no new firms, employing a significant number of unskilled women, have moved into Peterlee during the last decade and contractions in employment opportunities have produced a serious shortage of female jobs (see Fig. 4.1 and section 5.2 below).

The Corporation's Annual Report for 1977 states that 7,000 new jobs are required in the sub-region by 1985 but it is very difficult to see how this might be achieved. If the previous year's (exceptional) results were repeated only 2,000 new manufacturing jobs would be added by 1985, while the possibilities of an increase

(1) Ch. III, section 3.4 above.

in service sector employment appear very limited. It is probable that the Corporation, re-styled as an industrial development agency, will continue to achieve modest successes; new advance and nursery factories are now being built and additional industrial land is being sought to enable expansion to take place. But, aside from the fact that an overall shortage of jobs is likely to continue - because 7,000 new jobs will not be created by 1985 - there remains the major problem of the kinds of employment which will be made available. And it does not appear probable that further industrial development will provide large numbers of unskilled jobs, currently required by both men and women. Consequently, the prospects of a marked reduction in unemployment, without a major extension of training facilities or the (unlikely) emergence of new labour-intensive industries, are not great. Furthermore, apart from continuing unemployment problems, the sub-region will eventually have to face the exhaustion and closure of the remaining long-life collieries and this will have dramatic, far-reaching consequences for the area. Peterlee, in 1977, still has a long way to go before it is able, fully and effectively, to serve the employment needs of the sub-region.

5. Overview: Peterlee and its sub-region

5.1 Male employment

In the thirty years since Nationalization, employment in coal mining within Easington R.D. has diminished by more than 60%, entailing the loss of nearly 11,000 jobs by 1974. Nevertheless, the N.C.B. remains by far the largest local employer, currently providing approximately 40% of male jobs available within the former Rural District (including Peterlee). But the importance of mining employment varies considerably within the area. In 1971 only 12% of male workers resident in Peterlee were engaged in mining while for the R.D. villages the proportion was almost 50% - and very much greater in the coastal villages with active collieries. This contrast between Peterlee and villages - very broadly between "modern" and "traditional" livelihoods - is of course heightened by environmental, social and cultural differences.

The N.C.B. has continued to account for a large proportion of male jobs available within the area, despite a large contraction in manpower, principally because the overall number of jobs has progressively declined. In 1948 24,523 men were employed in the S.E. Durham area (the present Peterlee & Easington and Wingate Employment Exchange Areas) compared with only 16,047 in 1975.⁽¹⁾ In other words, the N.C.B.'s continued dominance as an employer has been maintained because new industry has not been introduced into the area on a scale large enough to compensate for contraction in mining employment. One of the principal results of this has been that, increasingly, men have commuted to jobs outside the sub-region.

(1) Department of Employment estimates. Note that these figures relate to the number employed at establishments within S.E. Durham; they do not relate to the resident population.

Some of the salient characteristics and trends in employment, in relation to Peterlee and the R.D. as a whole, are given in Table 4.3 below. Over the period 1951-71 the economically active male population declined by nearly 3,000 in the R.D. Taken in the context of an almost static total male population this reflects, primarily, an ageing population structure - and both of these factors stem from continued outmigration from the area. If the natural increase had been retained the male population would have increased by perhaps 5,000 over the twenty year period; instead, large numbers of mainly young men have left the area and consequently the economically active male population (and the male economic activity rate) has fallen. Outmigration has been one of the main responses to the decline in employment opportunities and has received the special encouragement provided by the N.C.B.'s labour transfer schemes.⁽¹⁾

A second response has been that men have had to travel to work elsewhere, while continuing to live in the R.D. In the 1950s it was still common for men to live close to their work - in the village appended to the colliery. Although large numbers of men continue to follow this pattern of life, an increasing proportion (32% in 1971) now work outside the R.D. area altogether, most of them travelling to Wearside and Teesside. Peterlee, the only centre of new industry in the area, could not provide sufficient employment

(1) For details of the N.C.B.'s transference schemes see R. Taylor's thesis Implications of Migration for the Durham Coalfield (1966) and also Ryhope: A Pit Closes, Dept. of Employment and Productivity, 1970. (Ryhope Colliery, which closed in 1966, was situated between Seaham and Sunderland; the D.E.P. study consequently has considerable relevance to experiences a few miles south in the Easington R.D. area).

Table 4.3 Male employment trends, Easington R.D. and PeterleeEasington R.D. (including Peterlee)

	1951	1961	1971
a) Total male population of R.D.	41,729	42,770	42,082
b) Economically active male residents	27,221	26,800	24,278
c) Economically active male residents in employment	26,560	25,590	22,308
d) Males resident in R.D. and working in R.D.	23,547	21,200	15,128
e) Males working in R.D. but resident elsewhere	2,275	2,860	2,700
f) Males resident in R.D. but working elsewhere	3,013	4,390	7,180
g) Percentage of employed males resident in R.D. working elsewhere (f/c x 100%)	12%	17%	32%
h) Net <u>outward</u> (-) movement (e-f)	- 738	- 1,530	-4,480

<u>Peterlee</u>	1961	1971
a) Total male population of Peterlee	6,451	10,599
b) Economically active male residents	3,550	6,240
c) Economically active male residents in employment	3,340	5,590
d) Males resident in Peterlee and working in Peterlee	600	1,690
e) Males working in Peterlee but resident elsewhere	850	1,390
f) Males resident in Peterlee but working elsewhere	2,740	3,900
g) Percentage of employed males resident in Peterlee working elsewhere	82%	70%
h) Net <u>outward</u> (-) movement	-1,890	-2,510

Source: Census of Population.

Note: Census definition of economically active includes the employed, those out of work through sickness and those seeking work.

(in manufacturing or the service sector) to have any appreciable impact on this trend. In fact, Peterlee could provide employment for only 30% of its own male population. The position is almost certainly not dissimilar today, since the addition of about 1,000 manufacturing jobs (together with few male service sector jobs) has been accompanied by an increase of nearly 2,000 in Peterlee's economically active male population, over the period 1971-77. Quite clearly Peterlee is not self-contained with respect to employment and it is no longer the case, as in the 1950s, that a large number of Peterlee men are able to obtain work at the collieries surrounding the designated area. Peterlee has become a dormitory town, accommodating workers employed in industries several miles away, outside the sub-region. And in the absence of sufficient male employment opportunities being created at Peterlee, the sub-region as a whole has become dependent upon employment provided elsewhere.

The third - and undoubtedly the most serious - effect of the failure to bring new male job opportunities to the area is unemployment; the severity of this problem was dramatically illustrated in Fig. 4.2. As previously noted, a large proportion - currently about two-thirds - of unemployed men in the S.E. Durham area are unskilled, classed as "miscellaneous" and predominantly "general labourers". Analyses of Department of Employment data, undertaken by the Corporation's Policy Research Unit in 1973,⁽¹⁾ also showed that 40% of these men had been last employed in mining, 38% were aged 55 and over, and 52% had been unemployed for more than 39 weeks. This strongly suggests that a fairly considerable

(1) Labour Availability in the Peterlee Sub-Region; Policy Research Unit, P.D.C., Nov. 1973.

section of the unemployed are redundant miners, excluded from re-deployment by the N.C.B. on account of their age and constituting a substantial "class" of unemployables - men with limited and obsolete skills. In some of the villages affected by pit closure male unemployment is highly inflated by large numbers of redundant miners; in Thornley, for example, the census recorded a 12.5% male unemployment rate in 1971⁽¹⁾ - twice the rate recorded for the R.D. as a whole.

Current proposals (put forward by the National Union of Mineworkers and partially accepted by Central Government) for the earlier retirement of miners will serve eventually to take these men out of the dole queue - and give older redundant miners some vestige of dignity. But this will still leave a very substantial number of unemployed men, many of them unskilled and, we have argued, not likely to find work with the kinds of firms Peterlee is now attracting. Perhaps the sub-group which finds greatest difficulty in gaining employment comprises unemployed school-leavers. Renewed recruitment in mining has attracted some and the armed forces provides the main opportunity for these boys to learn a trade. It still tends to be the case that those seeking non-manual work have to leave the area or commute to other centres. In many instances, of course, unemployment leads to outmigration, a response which has been characteristic of this area for decades.

In 1971, 3,080 men were employed in Peterlee itself, about one-third of them in manufacturing industry. Peterlee currently (1977) provides approximately 2,000 manufacturing jobs for men - which represents one-eighth of the total number of jobs in S.E.

(1) Note that this refers to economically active males seeking work as a percentage of all economically active males. This is not equivalent to the registered unemployed.

Durham. Peterlee's total contribution to the provision of employment in the area may be placed in perspective by noting that it now provides employment for about 4,000 men (in manufacturing and services) while the N.C.B. employs twice that number in the R.D. area.

Service sector employment in Peterlee covers a range of retail and administrative functions which have been increasingly centralised at the New Town; with the exception of the Corporation itself, the existence of the New Town has not generated service sector jobs which otherwise would not have been provided. Indeed, it can be argued that if Peterlee had not been established, the former pattern of service provision in each village would have produced a larger number of these jobs than is currently provided. Unlike some of the other New Towns, Peterlee has not attracted office employment on a large scale although the Corporation continues to hope that a department of Central Government may be persuaded to re-locate part of its operations at Peterlee. But even if service sector employment is significantly expanded at Peterlee in the future, recent trends strongly suggest that a large proportion of new jobs would be provided for women rather than for men.

The pattern of manufacturing employment was shown in Table 4.2. Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of this is that two-thirds of male employment is provided in textiles, clothing and food concerns - firms which are predominantly female-employing. The remaining one-third is provided largely by engineering plants which are recent newcomers to Peterlee and in several cases are likely to expand their labour forces in the future. Overall, Peterlee's industrial structure mainly comprises branch plants of national and, increasingly, multi-national corporations; the last three years

have witnessed the arrival of N.S.K. (Nippon Seiko Kaisha), a Japanese concern, Rothe Erde (German), Weiser and Cummins (American) and Vetro (an Anglo-Italian firm). D.J.B. is the only "locally-owned" firm operating its sole plant at Peterlee. But, contrary to the orthodox view of regional development, there is little to suggest that branch plants have per se led to employment instability. With the important exception of British Ropes Ltd., most of the firms which have been closed and/or liquidated at Peterlee have been small, single plant enterprises, possibly artificially supported by regional policy incentives.

Finally, returning to the situation in the sub-region as a whole, it is clear that future prospects for the coal industry are of central importance in relation to male employment opportunities. N.C.B. plans favour stabilisation of current levels of output from the east Durham collieries and substantial investment (estimated £11 million) has recently been made in modernising Easington, Horden and Blackhall collieries to facilitate the production of supplies for British Steel's Redcar works, now under construction. However, it is highly probable that modernisation will lead to some reductions in manpower; over a hundred men were made redundant at Blackhall in 1976, although the N.C.B. took new recruits - apprentices for skilled, mechanised production - at Easington. Generally, the future of these collieries is fairly secure and manpower reductions will probably not take place on a major scale at least during the next decade. But the same cannot be said with regard to collieries five miles further north in the Seaham area, where the recent discovery of a major geological fault may mean that undersea reserves cannot be exploited. In particular, the future of 1,600 men employed at Vane Tempest colliery is in some doubt. If this colliery closes the surrounding areas, Wearside and Peterlee, would evidently be unable to provide

alternative employment. Indeed, any closure or significant reduction in the mining labour force would serve to intensify an already acute unemployment crisis.

5.2 Female employment

In marked contrast to the decline of employment opportunities for men, the post-war period has witnessed a steady increase in the number of jobs for women in the sub-region. This is almost wholly due to the considerable growth of female employment at Peterlee. However, the sub-region is no more self-contained with regard to female employment than it is for male employment and a large number of women travel to work elsewhere.

The "tradition" that miners' wives did not go out to work began to weaken during the war; in 1938, there were only 1,322 jobs for women in the S.E. Durham area but the development of Ordnance factories increased this total to 3,412 by 1944.⁽¹⁾ After the war there was a strong concern not only to maintain but expand the female labour force - a concern expressed by Clarke, Lewis Silkin and, subsequently, Peterlee Development Corporation. It was argued that the provision of additional female employment, primarily at Peterlee, would enable and encourage women to go out to work; the Corporation stated that "the country needs the work these women can do, and the district needs the wages they can earn".⁽²⁾

The level of female employment provided during the war was, in fact, maintained. Even so, by 1951 only 20.5% of women aged 15 and over living in the R.D. were economically active, compared with a national rate of nearly 30%. Twenty years later, however, the local

(1) Department of Employment estimates. The most recent (1975) estimate is 8,820.

(2) Peterlee - Social and Economic Research, P.D.C., 1950, p.125. See also section 2.2 above.

Table 4.4 Female employment trends, Easington R.D. and PeterleeEasington R.D. (including Peterlee)

	1951	1961	1961
a) Total female population of R.D.	40,441	42,416	43,025
b) Economically active female residents	6,104	7,870	11,879
c) Economically active female residents in employment	5,811	7,600	11,240
d) Females resident in R.D. and working in R.D.	3,577	4,270	7,320
e) Females working in R.D. but resident elsewhere	336	400	670
f) Females resident in R.D. but working elsewhere	2,234	3,330	3,920
g) Percentage of employed females resident in R.D. working elsewhere (f/c x 100%)	38%	44%	35%
h) Net <u>outward</u> (-) movement (e-f)	-1,898	-2,930	-3,250

Peterlee

	1961	1971
a) Total female population of Peterlee	6,560	11,201
b) Economically active female residents	990	3,160
c) Economically active female residents in employment	960	2,970
d) Females resident in Peterlee and working in Peterlee	360	1,730
e) Females working in Peterlee but resident elsewhere	690	1,720
f) Females resident in Peterlee but working elsewhere	600	1,240
g) Percentage of employed females resident in Peterlee working elsewhere	62%	42%
h) Net <u>inward</u> (+) movement	+90	+480

Source: Census of Population

Note: Census definition of economically active includes the unemployed, those out of work through sickness and those seeking work.

rate had reached 37.2%, approaching the proportion of 42.8% recorded for Great Britain as a whole. In Peterlee itself 46.2% of this much younger female population was economically active in 1971. The declining importance of mining has thus been accompanied by the erosion of one of the "traditions" associated with it, and this has taken place to the greatest extent in Peterlee where mining is of least significance.

Table 4.4 shows some of the main trends in female employment for the period 1951-71. Migration was much less marked than for the male population and, consequently, the total female population of the Rural District increased by over 2,500. Over the twenty-year period the number of working women living in the R.D. doubled, reaching 11,240 in 1971. Much of this increase took place during the 1960s.

A sizeable minority of women living in the R.D. work elsewhere; in 1971 35% of women commuted to other areas (compared with 32% of men). Although women in the R.D. have become slightly less dependent upon employment opportunities provided elsewhere, the substantial increase in the female economic activity rate has not been matched by employment growth within the area; hence the R.D. has increasingly exported female workers to other areas. Few travel into the R.D. to work and there is a net outward movement of 3,250 women.

Peterlee, however, experienced a net inward movement of 480 female workers in 1971. At that time 3,450 women worked in Peterlee. Of this total, 50% were resident in Peterlee and 41% commuted from the villages of Easington R.D. However, it is important to note that 42% of working women living in Peterlee were employed outside the New Town - a situation which perhaps reflects the narrow range of opportunities available in Peterlee.

It is clear that Peterlee has made a major contribution to the provision of female employment in the area. By 1971 Peterlee's manufacturing and service industries accounted for 43% of female jobs available within the R.D., compared with only 22% in 1961. Employment growth in the surrounding villages has been slight; in 1951 there were 3,913 female jobs in the villages as compared with 4,540 twenty years later.

Female employment in the villages is primarily concentrated in the service sector, which includes retailing, education and local government. There is a number of small "factories" as well; several of these constitute workshops in converted buildings, engaged in the production of clothing etc. Within Peterlee, about two-thirds of female jobs are in manufacturing industry, with a heavy emphasis on manual occupations. Clothing and textile production dominate this pattern of female employment and, on account of the large scale of Tudor's operations, food production is also of considerable significance.

Nearly 95% of Peterlee's female employment in manufacturing is provided by firms which moved into the town before 1966 and Peterlee's six largest female employers accounted for 85% of the total female manufacturing jobs in 1976 (see Table 4.2 above). These firms were attracted to Peterlee by the existence of a large reserve of female labour, anxious and willing to go out to work. In this connection it can be argued that the higher level of consumption associated with the New Town in comparison with the villages (higher rents, "modern" styles of living and conspicuous consumption) helped to persuade women to become wage-earners.⁽¹⁾ No doubt this point was appreciated by incoming industrialists; so too was the absence of competition in the female labour market.

(1) See also ch. V below.

It seems likely that an important reason why additional major female-employers have not moved into Peterlee during the last decade has been that existing firms have helped to create a more competitive labour market with the result that Peterlee has become a less attractive location to female employers considering re-location. And it is also understood that some existing firms fear that new employers might "poach" their female labour and, no doubt, these fears have been made known to the Corporation through the Industrial Liaison Committee at which the Corporation meets employers.

This chapter has stressed that the major problem as far as industrial development at Peterlee is concerned has been the failure to attract new male employing industry sufficient to replace jobs lost in mining. The creation of many new female jobs at Peterlee has been seen, by contrast, to represent a successful achievement. In recent years, however, there have been indications that problems are also emerging in the provision of female employment. Reference to data presented earlier in Fig. 4.1 points to the shedding of female labour at Peterlee factories during 1974-5, leading to a net employment loss of about 300 jobs. During this period substantial redundancies occurred at Tudor (approximately 100 female jobs lost) and reductions in female employment also took place in the clothing industry. At the same time women from the sub-region commuting to other areas were affected by factory closures and redundancies, especially on Wearside. As a result, the female unemployment rate in S.E. Durham increased from a mere 1.8% in June 1974 to 7.1% in March 1976 and, despite some recovery in female employment at Peterlee, a rate of 12.1% was recorded in September 1977. (It should be noted also that female unemployment rates generally understate the position owing to non-registration by women not entitled to unemployment benefits and also because many who might be prepared to go out to work do not register.) It is evident that a

substantial number of additional jobs are required, both for men and women. In both cases diversification is essential to help achieve greater stability in employment and broaden employment opportunities. With regard to female employment, an excessive reliance on a small number of firms and a high degree of dependence upon a narrow inter-related range of products (clothing and textiles) means that employment is highly vulnerable to market demand and to decisions taken by a handful of companies. This situation has obvious parallels with the coal industry (especially pre-Nationalization) in relation to male employment. The provision of new male-employing industry at Peterlee must be a first priority but it is to be hoped that the Corporation also makes efforts to attract further female employment, providing much-needed jobs in a wide variety of manual and non-manual occupations.

6. Concluding comment.

In the first part of this account we pointed to the conflict of interests which resulted in Peterlee being accorded a very limited industrial development function. After designation, the newly-installed Peterlee Development Corporation, attempting to expand and broaden the scope of this function, was unable successfully to challenge the interests and concerns of other branches of the State upon which it remained heavily dependent. Preventative policies to deal with manpower reductions in mining were not pursued; such policies would have been political infeasible, possibly impracticable and have generally not formed a part of the State's industrial development programmes.

Later efforts, beginning in the 1960s, to stimulate industrial development at Peterlee have met with only partial success. Considerable improvements had first to be made to begin to make Peterlee "attractive" to industry. With the decline of mining it now became necessary to re-orient Peterlee to a new role; this was

difficult since the New Town had been designated and developed primarily to serve the labour needs of the coal industry. Moreover, the Corporation was (and is) dependent upon State regional policy, which has not always helped to support its efforts.

With the revision of its industrial development role, Peterlee gained functions which made it become much like other New Towns; the Corporation is now expected and encouraged to attract firms and expand employment. But the policies and procedures of the New Town Corporations and the Department of Trade and Industry (administering regional policy) are based on persuasion, not direction. Companies are free to choose not to locate a plant in Peterlee and the "mixed economy" is relatively ineffective in meeting the acute employment needs of areas like Peterlee. In fact, in this case it is the State, through the policies of the N.C.B., which has produced unemployment and consistently failed to implement strong, corrective measures.

In the present context of mounting unemployment, affecting the whole of the capitalist world, it is worth recalling the laudable aims and promises of State intervention set out in the early post-war years, aims which helped to create the New Towns policy. Written in a period of "full employment" (at least for men) the Pepler-MacFarlane report (1949, p.43) stated that:

"... more remains to be done before jobs are available within reasonable daily travelling distance of the homes of all who seek work, in adequate variety to provide for both men and women, for the skilled and unskilled, for the young and old, for those who are fit and for those who are in some degree disabled".

In a period of high unemployment, when the possibility of a return to "full employment" is increasingly declared to be unattainable, these broader - and eminently reasonable - objectives should not be lost sight of. Thirty years later, with the experience of the failure and inadequacy of State intervention in employment, such a statement now assumes an even greater relevance. Certainly, much more remains to be done.

CHAPTER V

PETERLEE - SOCIAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

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PETERLEE - SOCIAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the "social" dimension of policy and development. This account necessarily embraces a wide variety of concerns and elements of the development process, focussing on a very broadly defined range of "social aspects".

The first part of the chapter (section 2) discusses the social objectives set for the New Towns and the practical framework within which policy has been formulated and pursued. Section 3 then examines the early statements of social aims and policies for Peterlee.

Section 4 presents an account of the development of social life in Peterlee since designation. A major emphasis is placed on the pattern of social provision but we also attempt to identify broad social trends. Some features of the contemporary social scene in Peterlee are discussed in section 5. The chapter ends with a brief concluding comment.

2. Social objectives and policies for the New Towns programme.

2.1 "Guiding principles"

In our review of the evolution of the New Towns concept in chapter I, we noted the incorporation of social aims and visions in many communitarian proposals and pointed to the inclusion of a significant social component in the post-war New Towns programme. The Reith Committee developed and expressed a vision of social life in the future New Towns, which amounted to a compelling ideological justification for the policy. And in their reports, the Committee established "guiding principles" based upon this social conception and intended to enable its realization.

The statement, contained in the Reith Committee's terms of reference, that New Towns should be "established and developed as self-contained and balanced communities for work and living", had important implications for social policy and provided a basis for social planning.⁽¹⁾ Self-containment meant that the New Towns should be able to offer an adequate and broad range of opportunities for employment, shopping, recreation and social life. The conjunction of home and workplace was intended to remove the necessity for commuting and thus had economic advantages. But it was also thought that it would provide people with more time to participate in social life and enable them to identify more fully with their New Town than did residents of the much-maligned dormitory suburbs. Self-containment was thus expected to promote an intense social life, which was to be catered for and satisfied by the adequate provision of facilities within the New Town itself.

The notion of a "balanced community" can be considered to embrace a wide variety of concepts. The Reith Committee believed that "a contribution is needed from every type and class of person"⁽²⁾

(1) See also ch.I, section 3.2 above.

(2) Reith Committee, Final Report, para.22.

if New Towns were to achieve success and avoid reproducing the (supposed) disadvantages of the middle-class suburb or the working-class municipal estate. It was felt a mixed class structure would add a measure of social cohesion, providing, for example, leadership in voluntary organisations. The Committee also hoped that "class distinction" would be less evident in the New Towns than in the larger society and that people from different (occupational) classes would not be segregated either residentially or socially. Welding together these various strands was the concept of New Towns as communities, characterised by participation and dense social networks; communities in which people would "put down roots", have a sense of "belonging and counting" and feel a responsibility for the place in which they live.⁽¹⁾ Overall, the social vision was one "prompted by a romanticized picture of the traditional English village, with its squire and labourers, parson and schoolteacher all living happily cheek by jowl in a single social and residential unit" (Sheddick, 1958, p.8). The New Towns ideology represented a combination of the ideals and aspirations of the early post-war era, containing a conception of community life with almost mediaeval undertones, seemingly to ignore contemporary economic and social realities.

Although the Reith Committee declared that they did not wish "to prescribe the social and cultural pattern of a New Town",⁽²⁾ their recommendations barely fell short of prescriptions. Their reports placed a strong emphasis on the contribution to community life which could be made by voluntary organisations; it was implied

(1) Ibid., para.185.

(2) Ibid., para.187.

that such organisations can help to produce social cohesion, a feature believed to be characteristic of the true community. And in their detailed discussions on the provision of social facilities, the Committee revealed, very clearly, their prejudices and preferences; "cultural" pursuits were to be encouraged while some other activities met with the Committee's disapproval.

It was considered that the provision of a building suitable for meetings and other activities was an essential requirement at an early stage in a New Town's development. Additional meeting halls and community centres should be provided, concurrent with the growth of the town. It was anticipated that the new residents would be caught up in a spirit of enthusiasm and be keen to develop voluntary organisations, and that this should be encouraged by the provision of suitable facilities:

"The building of the town itself is a common interest of a novel and compelling character. And, although strangers to each other, the inhabitants will have much in common. They will quickly select associates sharing their diverse interests in religion, politics, social welfare, sports and games, study, gardening, and the arts and hobbies; and the creation from the void of societies and clubs for all these things is an absorbing interest in itself." (1)

The Committee also suggested that such facilities should be used to accommodate activities catering for all age groups. In this way, the whole family can become involved and this sharing of the same facilities might "help to strengthen the unity of family life by giving it a common loyalty". (2)

As the New Town developed, it was expected that a theatre, concert hall, art gallery, central library and museum would be built, preferably in the town centre. A theatre was considered to be "so important a feature in the life of a town that the agency /i.e. the

(1) Ibid., para. 186.

(2) Ibid., para. 223.

Development Corporation⁷ should itself, if necessary, assume responsibility for its operation." The Committee thought that private enterprise would "no doubt provide cinemas at an early date" but noted, with disapproval, that the programmes shown in commercial cinemas "have a limited cultural range, and American productions predominate." It might therefore be desirable, they felt, to establish a civic cinema offering a wider range of productions, possibly operated by the Corporation.⁽¹⁾

The "delicate, contentious and vital issue" of licenced premises drew comments about the "evil of drinking to excess" and the need to "keep New Towns free of this as of other degrading influences". Accordingly, it was proposed that all licenced premises should serve both food and drink. In addition, these "refreshment houses" might have gardens and recreational facilities, such as bowling and skittles. "Refreshment houses of this kind will do much to break down the barrier of shyness that newcomers to a town are apt to feel, and provide a background against which the more highly organised forms of social activity can develop".⁽²⁾

Opportunities for outdoor recreation were to be provided by parks, public gardens, playgrounds and playing fields at a minimum standard of ten acres per 1,000 population; the value of these facilities for "health, appearance and common pleasure is obvious".⁽³⁾ It was considered that close attention should be paid especially to the development of facilities accommodating the group activities of children and youths; these activities were "important in moulding character".⁽⁴⁾

Included in the Committee's reports are recommendations relating to the provision of sites for the churches, which hold "a high place

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- (1) Ibid., para. 195.
 - (2) Ibid., paras. 205-8.
 - (3) Ibid., para. 211.
 - (4) Ibid., paras. 221-2.

among the community builders; they conserve, develop and express the common principles, life aims and standards of conduct without which a community in the full sense cannot exist".⁽¹⁾ The churches were evidently to be encouraged to establish in the New Towns while, on the other hand, the Committee expressed reservations about the provision of certain spectacular sports. It was suggested, for example, that greyhound racing might have "objectionable" consequences and it was considered to be the duty of the development agency (the Corporation) to seek to prevent "ugliness, rowdiness and squalor in all places of assembly and amusement".⁽²⁾

These examples of the Committee's attitudes to the provision of social facilities give a fair representation of their overall philosophy on social development. Their recommendations, a curious mixture of idealism and condescension, were founded on the view that planning could make a major contribution to the achievement of (ambitious) social ends. It was implied that the Corporations, following the Committee's guidelines, would have the ability - and the power - to decide on what is best for the New Town residents, creating an environment which enabled them to lead a "happy and gracious way of life". It is a reflection of the spirit of the times and a measure of the strength of the ideology associated with the New Towns programme, that planning was held to be capable of so much and was successfully presented as a rational exercise, serving the interests of all.

The Committee also put forward many recommendations on a wide variety of other topics - education, health services, shops, transport, housing and employment - which all have an important bearing

(1) Ibid., paras. 230 and 227.

(2) Ibid., para. 230.

on "social development". Reference is made to these other elements in the course of this chapter, although the Reith Committee linked these forms of provision only very broadly to social policy. To an extent, these other elements were regarded as exogenous inputs into the social system and not the explicit concerns of social policy. Thus employment and housing were treated in relation to the general aim to establish "self-contained and balanced communities" but there is no discussion of the social implications of women going out to work or the problem of increased rents in the New Towns.

Finally, mention should be made of the Committee's views on the relationship between neighbourhoods and the town as a whole, an issue of contemporary importance in physical planning which was believed to have significant social consequences. In the late 1940s the idea of planning new residential areas as aggregations of "neighbourhood units", self-contained with respect to everyday needs and primary school provision, had achieved the status of planning orthodoxy and had received official support in the 1944 "Dudley Report".⁽¹⁾ The Reith Committee, however, while conceding that the neighbourhood was "a natural and useful conception" did not - as is commonly believed - wholeheartedly embrace the neighbourhood unit principle. They considered that there could be advantages in developing a New Town neighbourhood by neighbourhood and felt that, for reasons of convenience each such area should contain a primary school and "a centre with adequate provision of shops, places of recreation and refreshment, and a grouping of buildings containing a public hall and meeting rooms for various purposes".⁽²⁾ But the Committee argued that the neighbourhood must not usurp the functions of the

(1) Design of Dwellings, Ministry of Health, 1944.

(2) Reith Committee, Final Report, paras. 43-4.

town as a whole. The neighbourhood

"should not be thought of as a self-contained community of which the inhabitants are more conscious than they are of the town as a whole. For many educational, cultural and social purposes people will look to the main centre of the town, and the primary civic unity will be that of the town".⁽¹⁾

It was considered important that the New Towns should foster civic sentiment and pride; a New Town should be an urban community yet at the same time be characterised by the social relationships thought to exist in a village. But, as we seek to demonstrate, it was to prove difficult - and ultimately impossible - for the Corporations to pursue fully the Committee's recommendations and thus create the pre-conditions considered necessary to achieve their Utopia.

2.2 Practices and Procedures

Some of the difficulties encountered in attempting to implement Reithian social policy are discussed in this section. Firstly, we consider the problems which have occurred in meeting the need for social facilities. Secondly, we discuss efforts to influence the character of social life in the New Towns, making particular reference to the work of the Corporations' Social Development Departments.

a) Social facilities.

One of the major and most persistent of criticisms levelled at New Towns has been that, in many cases, they have failed to provide adequate social facilities for their residents. This criticism is often justified not only in relation to those services included within the relatively narrow definition of "social facilities" adopted by the Reith Committee, but also concerns a wide range of other, no less important, services - shops, education, health, public transport and so on. The experience of New Town development has

(1) Ibid., para. 43.

repeatedly revealed a substantial disparity between the Reith conception of New Towns, well served by a full range of facilities, and the reality of serious underprovision. And this problem is exacerbated since "the age structure of these new communities is usually such that the need for social and community services is greater than in an established area, yet the existing provision may well be below average".⁽¹⁾

Both the system of New Town finance and the nature of New Town development have an important bearing on these difficulties. In contrast to the assumptions of the Reith Committee - that Corporations would have wide powers not only to control but also to undertake the development of social facilities - Corporations were not, in the event, provided with substantial powers in this sphere. They were left highly dependent upon other agencies to develop social facilities and other services and the major task for the Corporations has been not so much to control their activities but rather to counter their reluctance to carry out developments in the New Towns. Moreover, on account of financial constraints, the Corporations have largely been unable to intervene and remedy deficiencies.

The provision of social facilities, even if we include only those within the Reith Committee's definition, is the "responsibility" of a wide variety of agencies, both in the public and private sectors. State agencies, including perhaps several Local Authorities, the Nationalized industries and Ministries of Central Government are involved; while within the private sector developers, commercial promoters, religious bodies and a plethora of other groups may

(1) The Needs of New Communities, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, (prepared by a sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee), 1967, p.21.

contribute to a New Town's social provision. Yet, with the (partial) exception of statutory development, such as education, where provision is not merely a responsibility but a duty, these agencies share a reluctance to commit resources to development, especially in the early stages of a New Town's growth. Developers - in the public and private sectors - consider it impractical to undertake investment in advance of full demand, before the population has grown to a level (thought) sufficient to support these services on a profitable or "cost-effective" basis.⁽¹⁾

The consequences of the developers' rationality have been that it has been common for New Town residents, at least in the early years of development, to suffer a variety of deprivations, leaving them to face the inconvenience and expense of reliance on other towns or, perhaps more commonly, having to make do with unsuitable, makeshift services. These deprivations have been particularly acute in the case of Peterlee and most of the other first-generation New Towns which were not grafted on to settlements which already provided a substantial level of services. Such problems are prolonged where, as at Peterlee, there is a low rate of population growth and may not, in fact, be resolved if the population target is too low. Experience has shown that the Reith Committee's recommendations on the range of provision are incompatible with their proposed target populations (30,000 to 50,000) for New Towns. Several New Towns have been helped by an upward revision in their targets but there remain others, including Peterlee, which are clearly too small to attract and support the provision of most major services on a purely commercial basis.

(1) However, some shrewd developers did realise that it was possible to exploit the reluctance of others and make long term gains. At Peterlee, Harlow and Aycliffe Ravenscroft Properties were able to negotiate ground rent leases from Corporations which were fixed for 25 years and thus promote highly profitable schemes. As Marriot (1969, p.80) remarks "in retrospect... this seems to have been easy money" for Ravenscroft.

It should also be added that New Towns suffer an inherent disadvantage by virtue of the fact that the provision of social facilities requires the commitment of new investment and thus revenue must normally cover both capital and running costs. Hence, in the case of cinema provision, it may be difficult to cover all the costs of a new cinema and consequently far from easy to find developers for such a scheme, while elsewhere an existing cinema may be able to survive because capital costs have become relatively insignificant. This example serves to demonstrate the considerable advantages that the "partnership" New Towns such as Northampton and Peterborough (which include old-established centres) have over towns like Peterlee, developed on virgin sites.

In this situation the Corporations can be in an unenviable position. While trying to persuade these agencies to develop services, they may have to face the criticisms of residents who assume that responsibility rests with the Corporation. Further difficulties may arise if an uneasy relationship exists between the Corporation and Local Authorities; although the latter collect rates from the New Town they have a considerable area of discretion, which may be shown by an unwillingness to become involved except in the provision of statutory services. But the Corporations are virtually powerless since they are not allowed to contribute more than a tiny proportion of their budget to the development of social facilities.

The position of Corporations in this respect stems from the provisions of the New Towns Act and also Ministry practices, no doubt partially derived from the attitude of the Treasury. The New Towns Act stated, with some ambiguity, that Corporation finance for amenity developments

"shall be approved by the Minister with the concurrence of the Treasury as being likely to secure for the Corporation a return which is reasonable having regard to all the circumstances, when compared to the cost of carrying out these proposals". (1)

In practice, this meant that such schemes would have to be shown capable of being self-financing (covering capital and running costs), which left the Corporations in much the same position as private developers. Unable to justify social provision on commercial criteria, the Corporations were only empowered to undertake small scale schemes for community halls and tenants' common rooms. The Ministry allowed these facilities to be financed from the Housing Revenue Account, with their capital cost met by tenants through housing rents. Running costs were supposed to be covered by hiring fees, a proposition which proved difficult to achieve.

By the 1960s the failure of New Towns - especially the smaller provincial New Towns - to develop adequate social facilities was belatedly recognised by Central Government. In 1963 Corporations were allocated a Major Amenity Fund, totalling an amount of £4 per head of the incoming population⁽²⁾ for expenditure on social facilities. It should be noted that this was not a "free" grant; it meant only that Corporations could allocate this expenditure from their Capital Accounts. Moreover it was a once-for-all allocation and was intended to be used to contribute to schemes carried out in partnership with other agencies. At the same time Corporations were given permission to spend up to £2,000 a year at their own discretion in order to help community groups; this became known as the Minor Amenity Fund.

(1) New Towns Act, 1946, 12(7).

(2) Calculated as £4 per head of the difference between the population existing at designation and the target population.

However, the new arrangements made only a marginal impact. The Major Amenity Fund was far from generous, especially since it was an allocation which fixed a Corporation's total spending on social facilities; once spent, further funds would not be forthcoming. Peterlee's allocation, amounting to nearly £120,000 was meagre in relation to the cost of social provision.⁽¹⁾ Some Corporations also experienced difficulty in persuading other agencies to develop schemes to which they could contribute from the Fund (Broady, 1968). Peterlee has been relatively fortunate in this respect, however, and the Fund has been used to contribute to the provision of a sports hall, swimming pool, youth club and the sports complex currently (1977) under construction.

At Peterlee, as in many other New Towns, many forms of social provision considered essential elsewhere have come at a late stage in development and there are still significant deficiencies. The problem was, and remains, that of encouraging other agencies to become involved - and it appears unlikely that the relatively modest contributions made available from the Major Amenity Fund are able to dispell their reluctance. It can justifiably be argued that Corporations should have been given much greater powers to provide social facilities and undertake such expenditure in advance of full demand. As Wirtz (1975, p.217) points out, the infrastructure of New Towns - roads, electricity and sewers - are provided in advance of full demand and advance factories are built before a tenant is found for them. Wirtz asks: "why should different criteria be

(1) It is of interest to note that the Corporation argued, without success, that the allocation should take account not only of Peterlee's population but also that of the surrounding area to be served by social facilities provided in the New Town. In 1973 allocations were increased to take account of inflation; Peterlee received an addition of a mere £17,000 to the Fund.

applied to the provision of social facilities?" The answer may be, quite simply, that despite the views expressed in the Reith reports, the New Towns programme has been dominated by the narrow concern to promote profitable investment, a concern which has undermined the prospects for social change and reform through New Town development.

b) Social Development Departments

Although very limited in their abilities to undertake or effectively control the provision of social facilities, the New Towns Corporations have maintained some commitment to a social policy, in many cases founded on Reithian conceptions of "community". Elements of social policy, often ill-defined, can be found in many of the Master Plans and a Corporation's Members and officers may be guided by social objectives (frequently implicit), but within most Corporations it is the Social Development Department which is considered to be primarily concerned with "social" issues and which is regarded to be the custodian of social policy.

A small number of Social Development Officers (S.D.O.'s) were appointed when the first New Towns were designated but in almost all cases they were dispensed with by the early 1950s, largely as a result of cuts in public expenditure. Hence, their main contribution was to provide a social policy input for the Corporations plans; they were not present to witness the arrival of a substantial influx of population. During the early 1960s a few of the New Towns (including Peterlee) once again appointed S.D.O.'s although this generally meant no more than the appointment of one or two officers. An important turning point was reached in 1967 with the publication of The Needs of New Communities, a report prepared by the Government's Central Housing Advisory Committee, which strongly recommended the establishment of effective Social Development Departments in the New and Expanded Towns. Following this report existing Departments were expanded and new ones established, such that by the early 1970s S.D.O.'s were to be found in most Corporations.

The existence of Social Development Departments emphasises the viewpoint, held by the Reith Committee and revived in recent years, that it is the Corporation's task to "develop" not only the physical but also the social environment. And since the Corporations are restricted in what they can do in terms of the actual provision of social facilities, "social development" has tended largely to focus on the more nebulous concerns of social life, stressing especially the potential contribution of voluntary organisations. It would seem, judging from a recent study (Horrocks, 1974), that although the functions of S.D.O.'s differ considerably from one Corporation to another, almost all commit a large part of their efforts to encouraging and assisting in the formation and development of groups and organisations in the New Towns. This is widely considered to be an important part of their work and it is this, above all, which makes them the inheritors of Reithian social policy and (a possibly outdated) ideology. Secondary, related functions may also be added, however, which include social research, public relations, information and advice services and, more generally, providing a "social" input for Corporation policy.

It appears that the role of S.D.O.'s is seriously constrained both within the Corporations and in external relationships with residents, and this serves to weaken significantly the prospects for effective social development policy. Within the Corporations the principal S.D.O. is frequently not accorded chief officer status and S.D.O.'s are generally not expected to involve themselves with the social dimension of policies pursued by other departments. S.D.O.'s are expected to concern themselves with subsidiary issues and not criticise or contribute to policies of a more crucial nature - in housing or employment, for example. And within the community they

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tend to confine themselves to non-contentious areas because their position as Corporation employees limits their participation in social movements which are in conflict with the Corporation (tenants' associations, action groups etc.).

Having sketched out some of the main social components of the New Towns programme as a whole we now return to the specific case of Peterlee to consider in more detail the social aspects of development.

3. Peterlee: initial social objectives and policies

The Designation Order had established two major guidelines having a direct bearing on the social functions and characteristics of Peterlee. Firstly, the local re-housing function determined Peterlee's status as primarily a Miners' Town. Secondly, Peterlee was to serve as a new social focus for the Rural District; the Designation Order stated that it would

"provide the recreational and shopping centre which is needed to give the district as a whole a greater degree of cohesion and self-sufficiency".

In addition, the Reith Committee's reports provided an overall framework for policy which could not be ignored - despite the fact that Peterlee's objectives were, in some respects, incompatible with those forming the basis of the Committee's recommendations. Later New Towns were able to pay less attention to the Committee's reports, but for Peterlee and the other first-generation New Towns their recommendations represented a blueprint for policy. Peterlee's first Corporation Chairman, Dr. Monica Felton, had also served as a member of the Reith Committee.

In formulating social policy the Corporation thus had to produce a compromise which incorporated both local circumstances and nationally-agreed policy. This was by no means easy since there were some fundamental differences: Peterlee could not achieve social balance, except perhaps in the long term, because its main function was to re-house local miners. On the other hand, the Corporation did feel that it was possible to pursue the broader aim of creating "a community" and set out to specify the style of social life which the New Town should foster. In addition, the Master Plan provided an opportunity to apply Reithian guidelines in the planning of social facilities.

The generalised social policy adopted by the Corporation was founded on an attempt to remove those local characteristics considered "unacceptable" and replace them with a more "wholesome" social life. At the same time it was felt that the New Town should not be alien to the area - especially since its origins and functions were local - and that efforts should be made to preserve some of the "better" social aspects of the locality in Peterlee. A.V. Williams, evidently highly influenced by the Reith reports, summarised this conception:

"my own view ... is that we should aim to build a community that combines local characteristics with that degree of communal life and associational activity that gives each individual opportunities for a full life and the feeling of belonging to the community and of making a contribution to it.

Other characteristics that we should foster are that it should be as democratic and free from class consciousness as possible, self-contained and yet not self-centred". (1)

It is clear that the Corporation's normative view of the social life of Peterlee, based on weakly grounded value judgements, derived from a concern to justify the New Town. Following an approach not dissimilar from that of Clarke in "Farewell Squalor", the Corporation largely condemned the physical and social environment of the pit villages and built up a vision of the promise of Peterlee. It was pointed out that the villages

"because they were isolated, and because the vast majority of men were employed at the same colliery, developed a male solidarity that now opposes the introduction of new ideas and ways". (2)

It was then argued that the development of the New Town was the best method of introducing these "new ideas and ways", a point which was

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- (1) General Manager's report to P.D.C. Board on Social Development, 16.10.50 in PDC file AS22.
 - (2) Peterlee - Social and Economic Research, P.D.C., 1950, p.50.

repeatedly made by Dr. Felton at public meetings in the villages. Dr. Felton herself was particularly concerned to improve the lives of women which, she thought, constituted "sheer drudgery" in the villages.

Broadly, the Corporation sought to equate Peterlee with a "better" and "fuller" life incorporating "modern" standards, while denouncing the villages as insular and squalid. However, there were considered to be certain facets of pit village life which should be fostered in the New Town and which fitted in to Reithian notions:

"It is essential that Peterlee should retain the active comradeship and friendliness of the colliery villages, which stems from the local tradition and common occupation, but avoid perpetuating the narrow cramping life of the villages within the New Town." (1)

Similarly it was noted that such pursuits as allotment gardening were common in the area and should be encouraged; provision for Co-operative stores was also recommended.

The social conception of Peterlee was a formula both for change and stability. It was assumed that it was possible to move people to new houses and replace the workingmen's club with a community centre as the focus of social life yet "retain the active comradeship and friendliness" of the villages. The major objective, underlying the whole scheme, was that of stabilising and maintaining the mining labour force by the introduction of improved living conditions, the Corporation taking it upon itself to decide what these improvements should be. One very important consideration, to which the clearest reference is made in an early, external research report, (2) is that

(1) Ibid., p.51

(2) Report on Social Development at Peterlee presented to the Corporation by Charles Madge and J.R. James, 31.3.48, P.D.C. file RS 2/1. This report was intended to be preparatory to a research study by Madge and James, which was apparently shelved. Similar thoughts on social development pervade the subsequent work of Lubetkin's team but are stated much more subtly.

of providing an environment in which family life would flourish. There was a concern to strengthen the family unit; the New Town should not mean that "the family itself becomes unsettled and relations within it uncertain", producing the "atomised culture" and "reduced birth-rate" characteristic of the rest of England. Ideally, this report states,

"The wife must be enabled to bring up a family of four or more children without forfeiting the right to exist as an independent person. The high birthrate of the mining areas must be preserved, while the position both of mothers and children must be vastly improved."

There were fears that "unless a family of four children becomes the accepted norm ... there will be a rapid cumulative dwindling of population" and an ageing population structure, which "would lead to social and economic chaos and an atmosphere of hopeless decay". Above all it was considered essential to maintain the family as a functioning reproductive unit and as a stabilising factor which would discourage migration "and a consequent shortage of miners at a time when coal is vital".⁽¹⁾ This was the fundamental aim of Peterlee which had to form the framework of social development policy, irrespective of the more ambitious ideas of the Reith Committee or, perhaps, the Corporation.

These early statements of social policy were accompanied by physical plans prepared under Lubetkin's direction. Research was undertaken to determine the range of facilities and services which Peterlee could support and proposals put forward for a remarkably substantial number and wide range of functions. Lubetkin argued that the town centre should be rapidly developed and thus soon become

(1) Ibid., pp. 2-3 (my emphasis).

a new focus for the district as a whole, in line with stated objectives. It was deemed "essential that, in the first instance, as much as possible of the social and recreational life of the town is concentrated in the town centre" and the first housing developments would consequently be located there and served by the centre. Later on neighbourhood facilities could be added, but initially nothing must prejudice the build-up of the town centre.

As was shown in ch. II (section 4), Lubetkin's plans had to be abandoned and new proposals drawn up to take account of the phasing arrangements worked out with the N.C.B. Lubetkin resigned and several months later the Research and Social Development Officer, a member of Lubetkin's team, was informed that his post had been "discontinued".⁽¹⁾ Thereafter, and until the 1970s, there appears to have been almost no concern to formulate social policy or undertake social research; even reference to "social" issues, explicitly recognised as such, is rare in the Corporation's records. The social aspects of development seem to have been dealt with in an ad hoc fashion and centred primarily on the difficulties of providing social facilities.

The Grenfell-Baines Master Plan was almost entirely concerned with land-use and did not discuss broad social objectives or define the character of social life to be created. It did, however, consider social provision and it provides an important indication of the extent to which this was conditioned by phasing arrangements.

In direct contrast to Lubetkin's ideas, the Master Plan stressed the self-sufficiency of neighbourhoods; it was believed that since the phasing plan dictated the piecemeal growth of Peterlee by a

(1) P.D.C. Board minutes, Oct. 1952.

process of accretion these scattered residential areas would need to be provided with their own facilities. It was stated that Peterlee should be

"planned in units which, in respect of nursery and primary education and everyday shopping facilities should be self-sufficient. Each unit should be small enough to allow access to these facilities from all parts of the unit, to be easily appreciated as a community and to be easily administered." (1)

Facilities were to be so widely dispersed throughout the town that "shops, nursery schools and social facilities will be available within a quarter of a mile from every home".⁽²⁾ Large units of 5,000 to 7,500 population - sufficient to support a primary school - would be further subdivided into two or three smaller units and each of these would contain a small group of "pantry" shops, a nursery school and a public house or social club.⁽³⁾

Despite this dispersed structure, tending to suggest an agglomeration of estates rather than a town, the Master Plan envisaged a substantial town centre. In the spirit of the Reith reports all the major functions are there, including a library, churches, art gallery and museum, concert and dance halls, cinemas, market, billiards hall, various clubs, hotel, college, sports centre and stadium - in addition to shops, offices, cafes, restaurants and administrative/civic buildings. The possibility that the self-sufficiency of the neighbourhoods might delay the development of the town centre was not raised, nor is there any indication of the time scale for central development. It is clear, however, that the Master Plan assumed that Peterlee would serve as the major centre for a population, in the Rural District, of 80,000.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Peterlee Master Plan, 1952, p.20.

(2) Ibid., p.21

(3) Ibid., p.21

(4) See also the Grenfell-Baines Town Centre Report, 1.9.51 in P.D.C. file RT 2/1.

The physical structure of Peterlee, including the location of facilities, was very largely determined by phasing and subsidence considerations. Development had to be low-rise to avoid the risk of subsidence and "the extraordinary limitations on land availability" made it "imperative to use to the full all land not materially affected by subsidence or natural surface defects".⁽¹⁾ Land unfit for building was to form the town's open spaces; schools would be sited adjacent to subsidence-prone areas which could then be used as playing fields. The planners had to face exceptionally severe constraints:

"as the required population of 30,000 can only be achieved if all land suitable for building is used for that purpose, the siting of open space is largely dictated by factors other than convenience".⁽²⁾

Accidents of geology thus directly affected the location of at least some types of social provision with the result that subsidence-free areas were for example to have a relative deficiency of open space facilities.

The work of Lubetkin's team and the subsequent Master Plan gives some insight into the Corporation's early ideas on social development. In the section which follows we attempt to reconstruct, in very broad terms, the actual pattern of that development over the last twenty-five years.

(1) Peterlee Master Plan, 1952, p.20.

(2) Ibid., p.30.

4. The development of social life in Peterlee

4.1 Introduction

In an effort to trace the social dimensions of Peterlee's development it has been necessary to rely heavily upon contemporary newspaper material which, despite its shortcomings, does help to reconstruct a picture of Peterlee in its earlier stages (and also, inevitably, demonstrates the pre-occupations of the media). But we have also borne in mind conversations with residents, particularly those who have lived in Peterlee for a number of years, and noted the findings of community studies. Given the enormous difficulties involved in relating a social history, this brief account is intended to do no more than indicate some broad themes and trends. Some particular aspects of social life in present-day Peterlee are further examined in section 5.

4.2 The pioneering phase

"The majority of the tenants are so glad to have a home of their own that they strive to live up to the high standards of the houses themselves. They wear gum-boots in the wet weather, when most of the roads carry mud from the sites being newly dug, but in the windows everywhere are the tokens of the house-proud - bright new curtains. Nothing looks so pathetic as "tired" furniture in a home that is as fresh as the dawn. "That must wait" say the housewives for whom rent has become a major item in life Many of them have young families. To see that they are properly fed, clothed and shod are the overriding considerations. These things come before any question of new carpets, or dining-room suites". (1)

To the first tenants of Peterlee, the great attraction and the great satisfaction was the possession of a home. They had to contend with the deprivations and inconveniences of no shops, no bus services and muddy surroundings and also the problem of paying high rents, but such difficulties were largely offset by the tenancy of a house. Typical of the first tenants was Mrs. Burton who, before moving into

(1) "The Pioneers of Peterlee" in Evening Chronicle, 26.1.53.

Thorntree Gill, had lived in one room in Horden with her husband and three children for six years; understandably, she was unconcerned about muddy surroundings.⁽¹⁾

But the task of turning a house into a home - for most, a new experience - was not so all-embracing an activity that there was no concern for social life. In fact, as the Reith Committee had anticipated, the first tenants were imbued with a pioneering spirit, reflected in their enthusiasm for social activities. Shared advantages and deprivations, similar backgrounds and common needs brought them together in much the same way as occurred in the early days at Watling (Durrant, 1968) and Dagenham (Willmott, 1963).

A workmen's hut, left on the Thorntree Gill site by the contractors, was taken over by the residents as a makeshift community centre. Dances and socials were held there and sports days were organised for the estate's many children. Various interest groups met there; the gardening club was particularly popular.⁽²⁾

But the activities and efforts of Thorntree Gill tenants were soon over-shadowed by developments at the much larger Edenhill site. Even by the end of 1951 Edenhill had a larger population than Thorntree Gill, and by 1953 Edenhill contained over 2,500 people. Thorntree Gill, with its 100 houses, did not expand further on account of phasing arrangements and developed physically and socially isolated from Edenhill.

Edenhill, the acknowledged nucleus of Peterlee, grew rapidly. Each week witnessed, on average, the arrival of ten new families - a rate of growth sufficient to maintain a sense of dynamism and a

(1) Northern Daily Mail report, 23.2.51.

(2) For one Thorntree Gill resident's nostalgic recollections of the community spirit there in the early days see Ruth Slater in Northern Echo, 25.10.65.

state of flux. Residents experienced the steady expansion of the estate over a period of several years, becoming accustomed to continual change.

The pioneering spirit was no less evident at Edenhill than at Thorntree Gill but was manifest on a more organised, formal basis - probably on account of the difference in scale between the two estates and the fact of continued immigration to Edenhill. At Edenhill a wooden hut also served as a temporary community centre, and by the beginning of 1953 a variety of groups was meeting there. "Already", it was reported, "the women have their Mothers' Meetings and their sewing class, a drama group, and, for the men, the beginnings of cricket and soccer."⁽¹⁾ Other organisations included two (apparently competing) gardening clubs, a Townswomen's Guild, Tenants' Association and Community Association.

In July 1953 Edenhill "common room" - a small meeting hall - was opened by the Corporation and subsequently managed by the Community Association. This gave further encouragement to social development, prompting the formation of more organisations; A.V. Williams remarked that "everyone in Peterlee seems to want to form a society of some kind... there is terrific activity and vitality in the place."⁽²⁾ The Corporation chairman echoed this statement in his New Year message:

"The friendliness of Durham folk is well-known, and this is now clearly shown by the rapid development of community life in the new town, with the formation of branches of many organisations covering almost every aspect of culture for all ages." ⁽³⁾

By the end of 1953, Peterlee possessed an identifiable - but temporary - centre comprising eight neighbourhood shops and the

(1) Evening Chronicle, 27.1.53.

(2) Northern Echo, 11.12.53.

(3) Durham County Advertiser, 31.12.53.

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common room on Yoden Road, Edenhill. A few months later saw the addition of Peterlee's first new public house, the "Royal Arms", adjacent to the shops. And in 1954 the first infants' school opened. Together, these basic facilities slightly decreased Peterlee's dependence on the neighbouring villages although, inevitably, links of friendship, kinship and employment with the villages meant that Peterlee people were in frequent, repeated contact with the villages where most had been born and bred.

Interest in the affairs of the New Town was sufficient to support the publication of an independent "community" newspaper, the Peterlee Weekly News in 1953. This survived for a few issues and carried advertisements primarily for home furnishings, decoration and so on. In addition, a correspondent using the pseudonym "Romulus" regularly exhorted residents to involve themselves in the life of the community and ignore those in the villages who sought to criticise Peterlee. In this connection, incidentally, it may well have been the case that Peterlee's local reputation as "Hungry Hill" - stemming from its high rents - produced a defensive reaction which fostered social cohesion. Referring to a similar situation at Watling, Durrant (1968, p.161) has argued that "antagonism from without breeds association within".

The common room was small and very fully used, to the extent that it was "pathetically inadequate for thirty thriving social, games and craft groups".⁽¹⁾ The Corporation proposed the purchase of Eden Hill House, a large house on the edge of Edenhill which had formerly been the headquarters of Horden Collieries,⁽²⁾ for conversion and use as a full-scale community centre. The Community Association, informed

(1) Daily Herald , 10.3.54.

(2) Older residents still refer to Eden Hill House as "The Bosses' House".

that financial restrictions might delay the scheme, pledged the support of voluntary labour to convert the House. A visiting reporter quoted a resident who said that "there's enough good will here to (1) build a dozen community centres - and the hands and hearts to do it".

In fact the House was purchased and converted by the Corporation - apparently without the use of voluntary labour - and was officially opened in October 1955. By this time another batch of organisations had been formed, ranging from the Garden Lovers' League to the Caledonian Society. These, together with the existing organisations - still well supported - were able to hire meeting rooms at the new community centre. The centre also accommodated doctors' surgeries, a welfare clinic and a branch library. The Community Association, which took over the management of the centre, was anxious for its success and, in order to encourage interest in its activities, organised occasional welcoming parties for newcomers to Peterlee.

The shared deprivations and hardships served both to weld the community together and also to undermine its social development. The rents problem, a fundamental issue, had a double-edged function. It was an issue which brought people together; at Thorntree Gill tenants had organised and sustained a limited rent strike in 1953 - an action which depended upon, and demonstrated, unanimity and commitment.⁽²⁾ Also resulting from the rents problem had been the formation (probably in 1952) of a Tenants Association, which pressed for rent reductions and voiced tenants' complaints - another sign of the enthusiasm and vitality of Peterlee people. But on the other

(1) Daily Herald, 10.3.54 (Plate 27 below).

(2) Thorntree Gill tenants withheld a rent increase of 1/2d., justified by the Corporation as necessary to cover costs of maintaining open spaces on their estate. Tenants regarded the increase as unreasonable and argued their case persistently to the point of making representations to the Minister of Housing and Local Government. After a dispute lasting four months they gave in, having made no headway in discussions with the Corporation.

The garden city on a coal heap!

Continuing his tour of
the New Towns
ALAN DICK
goes to Peterlee

THE people of Peterlee are used to rolling up their sleeves and getting their hands on the job. So they are not worried by the lack of a proper community centre, because, when authority loosens the purse-strings, there are enough craftsmen living in this new town with the knack and the will to put it up themselves.

That is the spirit of Peterlee—if you want anything doing, do it yourself.

Peterlee is a garden city built on a coal heap. Most of its men are miners.

Five thousand people are living here in 1,350 houses on top of 30 million tons of coal. Below them is the biggest pit in the country—Horden Colliery, where 4,000 men bring out 20,000 tons of coal a week.

The whole town sits on a honeycomb of workings. Its growth is a combined operation between the Coal Board and the Development Corporation, the greatest joint planning of coal-working and home-building ever undertaken.

One meeting-place

BUT although Peterlee is a miners' town they don't want to leave it at that. They are trying to create a balanced community.

That is why new light industries are planned and local administrative workers encouraged to live there. Five hundred families a year are settling in, building up to 21,000 in six or seven years and a final township of 30,000, with all kinds of people.



One of the sunny classrooms in Peterlee's Infants' School.

Life in this new town is seriously hampered by lack of places to meet. There is only one common-room—a pleasant enough place, but pathetically inadequate for thirty thriving social games and crafts groups.

Every endeavour to weld the social life of Peterlee is crammed into this one tiny hall, or into neighbours' parlours.

But there is hope. Mr. Arthur Williams, a dynamo of a man, who is general manager of the Development Corporation, told me that they are about to acquire a big old house "ready-made for the job," and members of the community association have offered to make it do with their own hands.

At the last meeting a townsman got up and said: "I'm a former bricklayer—I'll lay bricks." A plumber spoke up, an electrician, a carpenter, a plasterer . . . Peterlee won't lack a community centre long.

Let me introduce some of the people behind this self-help. . . Gilbert Longstaff is a miner

at Easington Colliery, living in Peterlee with his wife, Elsie, and their five children, three boys and two girls, from 8 to 18.

He is caretaker at the common-room-church in his spare time, churchgoer and British Legion standard-bearer, and he has no doubt about the future of the New Town.

"We're all jollying along together," he said. "There's enough good will here to build a dozen community centres—and the hands and hearts to do it."

Mrs. Longstaff is secretary of the British Legion, on the committee of the Townswomen's Guild and volunteer organist at the church. She played her favourite hymn for me on the piano in the front room: "The Day Thou Gavest, Lord."

She clasped her hands and said: "I love it here. I could never leave now. This is a wonderful new life."

Church hall soon

ONE of the great spirits in this place is a cherubic young man of 31 with unruly curls and a round, red face. He is the Rev. Reginald Bevers, Vicar of Peterlee.

This cheerful Christian is already a loved leader. On March 29 the Bishop of Durham will come to his common-room-church to confirm the first 45 youngsters.

Hear what the vicar says about life in the new town.

"Everybody feels they are making a new start. They are determined to weave a gracious way of living." The vicar hopes to start building a church hall this year.

He chuckled suddenly, rumbled the curls of his 24-years-old daughter, Margaret, and said: "We have five baptisms a week—that's better than bricks."

The vicar's wife, Nora, helps to run the Mothers' Union. "There's always a cup of tea ready in Peterlee," she said.

Too dear for some

ALAN BROWN is a miner at Easington Colliery and secretary of the Horticultural Society—busy with quizzes, films and talks, and raising money for an allotment hut.

He said: "It's lovely here . . . If you can afford it. But as long as I can work I wouldn't go back to the old miner's cottage, even if 'twere free."

He said it with a twinkle, but his crack about the rent was heartfelt. You will find it repeated over the garden fence of many of the new homes.

It is difficult for miners to reconcile themselves to the difference between the few-bob-a-week cottage and the 30-bob-and-more-a-week house. Rents are 24 per cent. in arrears at Peterlee and one in four families leave after a short time.

But offsetting this is the delight they have in their new homes and the new kind of life growing round them.

"We'll grin and bear the rent," said Alan Brown. "It's worth it." For he is happy with his little wife, Edna, and their girl of five and boy of seven months—"we had the girl's birthday party Sunday—and, oh, it was lovely! Everybody came."

He is one of the men willing to work on the community centre—provided they let him add a greenhouse.

'It's thrilling'

IT was late when I met Mrs. Elsie Lightfoot, chairman of the Townswomen's Guild. She had been at Sunderland all day at a Federation meeting. She said: "There is a thrill in building the life of a town."

She herself is mixed up in the Drama Group ("Mad Hatters in Mayfair" next), the Church Council and the savings group.

There may be no community centre yet in Peterlee, but the community spirit is as big as a miners' rally.

Plate 27. The garden city on a coal heap!

(Daily Herald, 10.3.54.)



Plate 28. Peterlee, 1956.

hand high turnover - caused mainly by high rent - cut away the newly-laid foundations of social life. By the end of 1955, for instance, nearly one-third of the 1951 intake had left and Peterlee was already labelled a "transit camp",⁽¹⁾ and its social organisations were undoubtedly weakened by the consequent instability of their membership.

There is evidence to suggest that by 1955-6 the pioneering phase, marked by an exceptional enthusiasm for social activities, was over. The New Town, now with a population of more than 6,000, was becoming too large to sustain the characteristics of an (idealised) village. The intake was also younger than it had been in the early days and young couples were tied to the home by young children. Freed of some of the deprivations of the early 1950s, the self-consciousness of the people as sharers in the hardships of pioneers began to disappear. Private living gradually became the norm and communal activities became the province of a small minority.

4.3 Towards privatisation

".... generally, formal associations are successful during the early years of an estate when the difficulties of poor roads, lack of shops and bad transport facilities bring people together in mutual aid or sympathy and so make them more ready to meet on a more formal basis. Often, however, the initial interest is lost, and if societies remain at all they tend to be taken over by small groups of people of similar social standing." (2)

The latter half of the 1950s witnessed a decline in support for the formal organisations of the type characteristically associated with community centres. To a considerable extent this was symptomatic

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- (1) The first recorded use of this label was by Thorntree Gill tenants who issued a statement at the end of their rent strike pointing out that rent increases were "converting Peterlee into a transit camp" (Northern Daily Mail, 8.2.54).
- (2) Pickett and Boulton, 1974, p.65.

of a transition towards "privatisation" or home-centredness, encouraged by the increasingly ubiquitous T.V. set. At the same time, however, the provision of churches and a workingmen's club drew support away from the existing organisations and towards these more firmly established "institutions".

The provision of the community centre at Eden Hill House appears to have caused as many problems as it solved. Conflicts developed over the use of the centre, arising primarily out of the Community Association's insistence that groups meeting there must affiliate, by subscription, to the Association. The Association, largely the creation of the Corporation and partially controlled by the Corporation,⁽¹⁾ was not popular in all quarters and several organisations refused to affiliate to it. Subsequent arguments led the Methodist minister to denounce "bitterness and wrangling" between the various organisations in Peterlee and prompted the vicar to complain of "power seekers", whose damaging influence in community affairs went unchallenged by the "apathetic" majority.⁽²⁾

The Community Association itself was not, however, affected by these disputes to the same extent as its opponents. In fact, a year after the centre had been opened, the Association reported that it had five sections (photographic society, dancing club, music society, badminton and table tennis club and rifle club), twenty-one affiliated groups and four hundred individual members. A full-time warden had been appointed and the centre still accommodated doctors' surgeries, a welfare clinic and library. By contrast, the Tenants' Association - a group representing tenants' interests which had

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- (1) The Corporation initiated the Community Association in March 1953, when it called a meeting proposing its formation. Two Corporation officers were among the trustees of the Association and the Association relied heavily upon the Corporation's support.
- (2) Sunderland Echo, 27.7.55 and Northern Daily Mail, 20.12.55.

refused to affiliate to the Community Association - complained that only 14 of its 400 members had turned up to its Annual General Meeting, no-one would fill its official positions and "the work of the Association had been falling on the same shoulders all the time and these people had been getting sick of it".⁽¹⁾ The Tenants Association was thus forced to disband.

The apparent strength of the Community Association and the success of the centre was founded on the precarious base of dedicated groups of enthusiasts. The narrow appeal of many activities at the centre meant that most associations had few members and if one or two left - typically the few mobile middle class leaders - then the group itself would collapse. This happened to several groups. The vicar bemoaned the disinterest of the majority:

"There are, in our town, those who seek only their own comfort, and keep 'themselves to themselves'. They are the vast majority who contribute nothing to the community life of the town. They are apathetic, indifferent, and couldn't care less about anything else but their own comfort."

"The vicar says he knows how nice and pleasant it is to stay in and enjoy the comforts of a new home, but asks people to spare at least one night for supporting some worthwhile activity which is trying to promote healthy community life." (2)

Such observations are perhaps hardly unusual, but their significance is emphasized by contemporary comments of a similar nature, contrasting markedly with the talk of the pioneering spirit in press reports of the early 1950s. It is of interest to note also the similarities between the views expressed here and those of the Reith Committee, stressing the idea of a "healthy community life".

(1) Northern Daily Mail, 19.1.56.

(2) Northern Daily Mail, 20.12.55 (Report of vicar's message in his parish magazine).

The Methodist minister was no less of an adherent to Reithian principles - particularly with regard to his stand, towards the end of the 1950s, against the Corporation's plans for public houses.

The rather diffuse character of Peterlee's physical development in the late 1950s had an important bearing on social development. The new estates at Dene House and especially in the South-West Area were detached and isolated from the existing concentration of housing in the north-eastern section of the town. The completion of neighbourhood shops at Acre Rigg (1956) Dene House (1957) and a small group of shops in the town centre (1957) reduced the functional importance of the shopping centre at Edenhill. In addition, there was a gradual transference of functions from the community centre to purpose-built facilities in the embryonic town centre. The Anglican and Methodist churches were completed (1957 and 1958)⁽¹⁾, doctors' surgeries were transferred to a central health centre (1960) and a public library, adjoining the technical college, was opened in 1962.

Together, these developments help to explain the declining importance of the community centre. For residents of the new estates it was both inconvenient and hardly necessary to go to Edenhill; the inadequacy of bus services provided further discouragement. Despite the efforts of the Community Association to promote the centre, few of the newcomers became involved in its activities and the Association complained that "once more the bulk of the work has been left to the few faithful members".⁽²⁾ The centre thus declined in use or at best the level of use remained static, whilst the population of

(1) The Anglican vicar of Peterlee had been appointed in 1953, and the Methodist minister in 1954. Both had held services in the temporary accommodation of the Edenhill common room and the community centre. A Roman Catholic priest was appointed in 1954, but the R.C. church was only completed in 1966.

(2) Sunderland Echo, 3.4.59.

Peterlee increased by the addition of more than one thousand newcomers each year.

One group of enthusiasts, the proponents of a Peterlee working-men's club, saw their hopes realized in 1957. Their new club, situated in the town centre, was both luxurious and successful - so much so that membership was restricted to residents of Peterlee, supposedly so that future residents would not be turned away. Hence, on the one hand the club helped to achieve Peterlee's self-containment by lessening the use of clubs in the villages, while on the other hand it was not helping Peterlee to become a social centre for the District as a whole - an interesting example of a contradiction of objectives.

Although this account may suggest the successful growth of opportunities - that is, facilities - for social life, two points should be emphasised to put this impression into perspective.

Firstly, the length of time taken to provide even simple facilities was considerable; seven years is indeed a long time to have to wait for a parish church, for instance. On a smaller scale, residents arriving on newly-completed estates had to contend with much the same problems as the first tenants did at Thorntree Gill. Tenants on the South-West estate, found an absence of virtually all basic services - no shops, no public telephone and an infrequent, erratic bus service.⁽¹⁾

Secondly, the pattern of facilities did not properly match the composition and resulting needs of the population. In a town reputed to have one of the highest birth rates in the country (and so nicknamed "Babytown" by the Daily Express⁽²⁾) there were no

(1) See Northern Daily Mail, 5.1.61.

(2) "Teething Troubles in Babytown", Daily Express 29.11.61. In 1961 almost one-third of Peterlee's population was under ten years of age.

nursery schools and few playgrounds. Isolated from parents who lived in the villages, the small, young, nuclear family in Peterlee tended to be confined to the home - or at least many of the women were. Working mothers had to depend upon childminders. The break-up of extended families, the inconvenient location of some facilities (centralised at Eden Hill House and the town centre) and the growth of female employment opportunities did not produce an environment which facilitated or promoted family life.

The difficulties involved in providing appropriate social facilities can usefully be illustrated by two examples - playing fields and youth facilities.

Shortly after its establishment in 1956⁽¹⁾, Peterlee Parish Council adopted a plan to provide playing fields and related amenities at Eden Lane. The Council was hampered by repeated difficulties in obtaining grant aid for the £22,000 project. Consequently, the scheme progressed very slowly in small stages and by 1961 only two football pitches and tennis courts had been completed. Financial assistance was eventually received - after many attempts - and the whole scheme, including a cricket square, bowling green and children's playground, finally completed in 1963. It had taken seven years for the council to meet an absurdly heavy commitment, a responsibility which they had to shoulder because the Corporation was not empowered to assist. Such a delay naturally frustrated efforts to establish sports in Peterlee and was certainly contrary to Reithian principles. Furthermore, it would have been difficult

(1) In the early days, Peterlee had largely been locally governed by Horden Parish Council. A public petition was organised in 1954 to press for the creation of a new parish of Peterlee. The Parish was subsequently instituted in 1956.

to find a more peripheral and inaccessible site than Eden Lane - a location which, presumably, was dictated by mining arrangements.

Towards the end of the 1950s increasing concern was expressed at the lack of facilities for youth; it was pointed out that although the proportion of youths was then very small (about 4% of the population was aged 15-19), it would increase considerably in the 1960s. Existing facilities for youth comprised little more than two church youth clubs. A youth club at the community centre survived for less than 18 months and was forced to close because of a lack of leaders. One press report noted that Peterlee youths had to go to the villages for entertainment⁽¹⁾ - notably for cinemas and dances - and others pointed to growing vandalism as a result of inadequate youth facilities. Peterlee Boys Club, founded in 1958, lacked the support needed to provide club facilities; consequently it had to meet in a school and was forced to limit its membership to 50 boys. As its chairman remarked on the overall position in Peterlee, the New Town "is not much better than a housing estate.... at the moment there is not even a juke box, let alone something more ambitious like a snack bar".⁽²⁾ The Corporation responded with promises of various commercial entertainment facilities, virtually none of which were actually built. Plans for three youth centres to serve different parts of the town were apparently agreed between the Corporation and County Council⁽³⁾ but were not implemented; in the event only one centre was built which opened in 1965.

A more general deficiency of Peterlee was the painfully slow rate of development of the town centre such that, ten years after the arrival of the first tenants, the centre remained "virtually as much of a planner's dream as ever".⁽⁴⁾ A few public buildings and

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- (1) "Nightly Pilgrimage Back to the Old Pit Villages"; Evening Chronicle, 24.4.58.
 - (2) Durham County Advertiser, 8.9.61.
 - (3) Northern Echo, 5.4.63.
 - (4) Sunderland Echo, 10.2.61.

C.A. Combats "Nothing To Do In Town" Belief

ALMOST half of the members of the Peterlee Community Association live outside the new town and come into into the town for their recreation.

This fact is revealed in a new handbook published by the Association, detailing its activities, which is to go to each of Peterlee's 5,000 homes and will also be given to new tenants coming to the town.

A foreword states: "We have often been told that there 'is nothing to do in Peterlee.' At the Community Centre we find this rather a strange attitude.

"Granted there are no cinemas, theatres, bowling alleys, dance halls and other things we have longed for for many years but at the Community Centre there are numerous ways in which to spend your leisure time."

The foreword goes on to point out that almost half of the members of the Association live outside of Peterlee and come into the town regularly to find entertainment at the Edenhill House Community Centre.

UNJUSTIFIED

It continues: "In the face of this fact alone the complaints that there is nothing to do in Peterlee seems unjustified. It is unlikely that a lot of people would be taking the trouble to travel to Peterlee week after week, come hail or snow, just to do nothing."

And the foreword claims: "Surely the Community Association is providing many of the social activities needed—it only remains for more of the residents to use the facilities available."

In the new handbooks all the sections of the Association give details of their respective activities and the various bodies affiliated to the organizations also outline their work.

Warden of the Community Centre, Mr J. Easton, comments: "We hope that the handbook will remind some of the older residents of the town that the Community Centre is still functioning as well as helping new residents to contact organizations they may like to join."

Bitter attack on centre's 'squabbles'

BY OUR PETERLEE REPORTER

"IS this just a building or are we a community centre? I have come to the conclusion we are just a building."

This bitter comment was made last night by Mr. Peter Dunn, chairman of Peterlee Community Centre, in a speech to members of the Management Committee.

He complained of apathy, internal squabbling and bad Press publicity. He said the community centre lacked community spirit, and was "nothing more than a collection of sections going their individual ways."

Mr. Dunn referred to the poor attendance at the meeting. "This room should be full. The others are apparently not interested."

A number of reasons were offered why people did not come to the community centre. But the committee should ask themselves, "Is it inviting and attractive? Are there too many internal squabbles and feuds inside the sections? Do a few people take all the credit?"

Sections showed a complete lack of interest in other sections. "I do not think half of you would know who the other secretaries are."

NE Not closing 25.3.64 hard-hit centre says

Our Peterlee correspondent

"PETERLEE Community Association is in no danger of closing," said Mr. Peter Dunn, Chairman of the Association yesterday. "Easington Rural Council would never allow this to happen."

At a recent Association meeting it was announced that the coming month would be critical in the Association affairs. It's year's working showed an increased deficit of £400 on previous years.

This was mainly due to the reduction of lettings at the community centre. A Peterlee Development Corporation office, the library service and the Roman Catholic Church had moved from the building to new premises.

The income from dances had dropped by £250 from other years. The profit from the past four weeks' dances had been £3 5s, 10s, £1, 13s 6d, which was not enough to pay for the hall's lighting.

Mr. Dunn said they would be having a publicity campaign to attract more people to the centre.

They were hoping to reach everyone in Peterlee to find out their interests and a handbook about the Association activities would be published.

As its festival would this year be held in the community centre and its grounds, this would also help to publicise the Association.

He felt the reason for the poor attendance at the dance was that young people were going to clubs where they could drink and listen to beat groups.

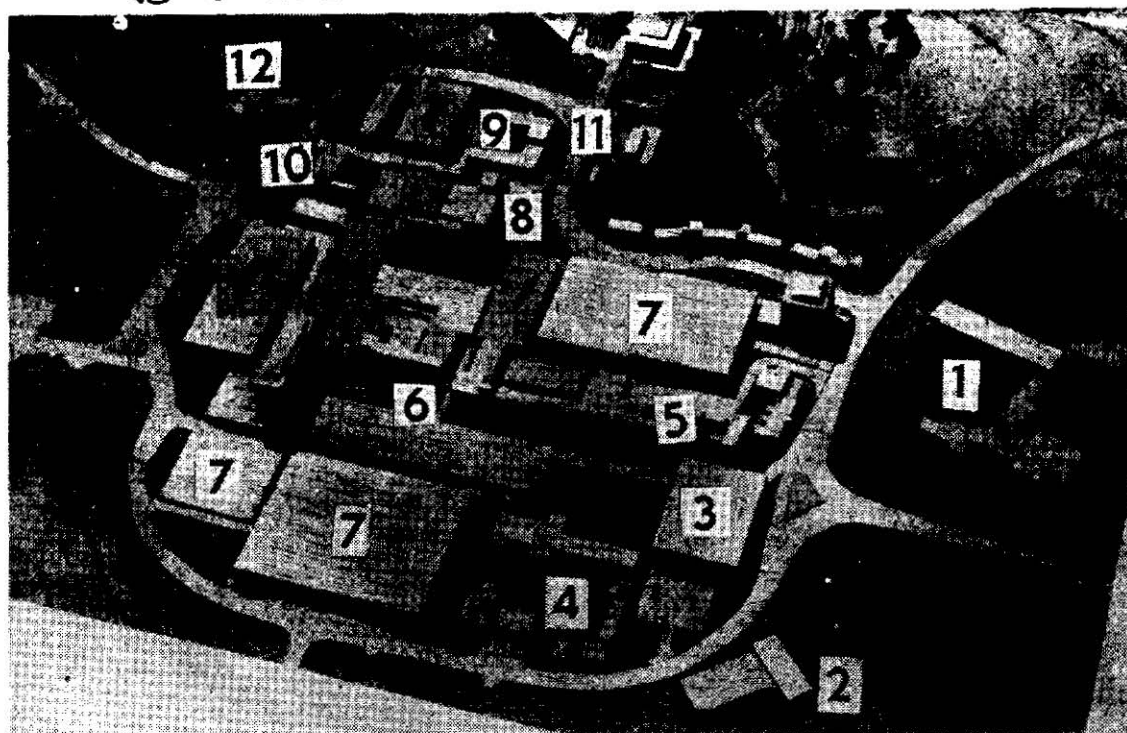
Plate 29.

Peterlee Community Association.

(Sunderland Echo, 2.7.64. and

Northern Echo, 25.3.64.,

25.6.63.)



1: Technical College. 2: Workmen's Club. 3: Entertainments centre. 4: Fire station, police station and courts. 5: Existing shops. 6: Shopping. 7: Car parks. 8: Town halls group. 9: Health centre. 10: Post Office and youth club. 11: Methodist church. 12: Church of England.

Tomorrow's Peterlee will make shopping easy

YOU won't need to walk or don a raincoat in Peterlee's new £1m. town centre.

It will bristle with escalators, underpasses, walkways, pram ramps and car parks — so close that you could touch the shops. In most parts 20ft. wide canopies will keep out the weather.

The Peterlee of the future will also have a bit of the New York look about it, with further expansion upwards rather than across. If one of the ground level car parks is not sufficient another layer is added and the 1,000 car capacity doubles.

This will be Peterlee town centre in just three years, when the Development Corporation hopes, it will be "mostly complete."

The new plan, which the general manager, Mr. A. V. Williams, announced at a Press conference yesterday, brought much good news and few surprises. Many had anticipated the closure of Yoden Way, the creation of a pedestrian precinct and two tier shopping.

But Mr. Williams had other things in the bag: nearly 200 shops, an entertainment centre over a supermarket featuring a cinema, bowling alley and indoor golf, hotel, parking for 4,000 cars and a 20-storey block of flats.

Imagine the present town centre as the base of an ashtray, with a perimeter of the petrol stations, churches and technical college.

Walkways will span the valley and link directly to the first floor shops, 77 of them. Underpasses will link the perimeter and ground floor shops, numbering 103.

The car parks will be an integral part of the town centre — yet

OUR PETERLEE REPORTER

segregated from it. "They will be near the walkways at the lower level and it will take only two minutes to reach the shops farthest from the car parks," said Mr. Williams.

Two escalators, opposite the existing Housing Department and in the Town Hall Square, nearby, will carry shoppers from the ground floor shops to the first floor. There will be several "terminals" at points where ramps, stairs and escalators converge.

The walkways, escalators and ramps are part of phase one of the building — which should start in July. Phase one also includes much of the ground level work, with phase two moving up to the higher level.

The long-awaited plan was developed in the offices of the chief architect, planning, Mr. Harry Durrell, by a team led by his assistant, 34-year-old Mr. Theo Marsden.

It is the first major planning job completed by Mr. Marsden, who lives in a "sprawling" converted 18th century vicarage at North Cowton — with his wife and two daughters.

Principles

Mr. Williams said the new plan was "modern to a fairly high degree, but it's supreme virtue is simplicity and workability." It is an "attempt to cope with the motor age."

Mr. Marsden said the design principles evolved from a study of the site contours, the regional draw of the town centre and the amount of traffic entering the town.

The principles were: The segregation of pedestrians from cars; use of the natural site contours; formation of a basic framework,

and parking for the great potential traffic flow.

Mr. Marsden said the regional draw may have been underestimated. Therefore, the town centre would have great flexibility, allowing not only the adding of layers to the car parks, but also expansion of shops in width and depth.

One problem which had to be met was the complete integration of the shops already in Yoden Way. This meant immediately that there would be more shops at ground level than above — 103 against 77.

With the closing of Yoden Way — which Mr. Williams said met

AYCLIFFE'S MASTER PLAN—how the new town will be expanded to house 45,000 people — will be announced on Monday.

with no opposition from the shopkeepers and property owners because although losing passing trade they were gaining many shoppers—Surtees Road becomes the main through road.

Part of Manor Way is also going, to make Fleming Place a cul-de-sac. The main junctions will be where the present roundabout is and at the other end of Yoden Way. Work is to begin immediately on "strengthening" Surtees Road. It could eventually become a dual carriageway.

The landscape architect, Mr. David Thirkettle, has been responsible for the Dene Park and lake, in Castle Eden dene, and in the town centre itself. Trees will

serve as windbreaks. Fountains in paved squares will give a piazza effect.

Mr. Williams felt unable to discuss fully the entertainments centre, where negotiations are at a "very advanced stage," or the town hall group of buildings, still awaiting Ministry sanction, which will be built next to the Central Youth Club.

Tall blocks

The town hall group will cost about £1m. and feature an assembly hall holding 1,200 people, council chamber and offices. The entertainments building may also have a public house, night club and filing station.

An office or flats block will straddle Yoden Way and there will be other blocks of flats offering a panorama of the dene, the new town and far out to sea.

In Peterlee yesterday afternoon, people thought the plan was "tremendous."

Rush for town sites

PETERLEE would be "substantially complete" in four years — and that included industry, the town centre and housing, Mr. Williams yesterday predicted.

"Our problem now is not finding the customers for industrial sites but finding the land to put them on. It's not just boasting but a fact. The number of things in the pipeline now is considerable."

"Things are really moving now, with a lot of interest in every direction. It's a completely different picture from some time ago."

a score of shops - half of which were untenanted - plus large empty areas awaiting development, constituted Peterlee town centre in the early 1960s. Commercial capital could not be attracted to develop the centre of this small New Town and the Corporation itself eventually had to undertake town centre schemes. The town centre thus did not serve as a focus for civic pride and identity and its deficiencies as a shopping centre meant that residents still relied heavily upon the villages and other towns. One result was that neighbourhoods, containing a range of shops almost as good as the town centre, functioned as separate and self-contained entities, a situation which reinforced their architectural differences.

4.4 "Small Town in Mass Society"

By the mid-1960s, a variety of circumstances and influences combined to bring about significant changes both in the concept and the pattern of development of Peterlee. Changed circumstances, particularly in the economic sphere, generated new problems and objectives. External influences of mass culture gave rise to new aspirations. Peterlee was now thought of not simply as a Miners' Town but as a social and economic "investment" which would serve as a spearhead in the drive to modernise the North-East.

Large-scale reductions in the local mining labour force meant not only a reformulation of Peterlee's industrial objectives but also entailed changes in its housing and social functions. Fewer and fewer miners moved into Peterlee and the town's economic ties with the villages were consequently weakened. As we saw in chapter III, an increasing proportion of immigrants came from outside the Rural District - these outsiders constituting a majority of the annual intake by 1964. Peterlee became a dormitory for workers employed at Wearside, Teesside and mid-Durham. The social impact of this new

wave of immigrants was two-fold: they brought new ways of life to the area and their tendency to rent a Peterlee house as a temporary expedient increased the turnover rate of tenancies. In east Durham, an isolated area dependent upon a single industry, their influence was very noticeable; Peterlee was labelled "cosmopolitan" in marked contrast with the traditional "occupational communities" surrounding it. And turnover, further exacerbated by repeated rent rises, reached a level where ten families were moving out of the town every week - a situation which militated against the formation of a cohesive, participatory "face-to-face community".

The necessity to develop male-employing industry in Peterlee came to be regarded as crucial and the means to achieve this in the era of Hailsham and T. Dan Smith were formulated within an all-embracing modernisation ethos.⁽¹⁾ Modern industry, it was argued, would be attracted to the modern environments provided by New Towns such as Peterlee - but it was necessary, also, that the people themselves should have modern attitudes:

"In blazing the trail to a technological future, in cultivating a society that will understand and contribute to it, in creating an environment which is consistent with it - these are the achievements by which the New Towns can enlarge and enrich the region". (2)

Closely associated with the image-building techniques of industrial promotion was a concern to provide prestigious social facilities such as the proposed "Arts and Humanities" Complex. The Complex had been proposed by Smith and described as an "analogue" to the Science Centre scheme, providing leisure activities for scientists accustomed to "a higher standard of culture than they will find in Peterlee".⁽³⁾

(1) See also Robinson, 1974 (N.E.A.S. W.P.7).

(2) Quoted from A.V. Williams, The Durham New Towns in the Future, 1969 (my emphasis).

(3) Quoted from the Director of the Northern Arts Association after being invited to comment on the new social needs of Peterlee stemming from the Science Centre project (The Journal, 20.11.68).

J.G.L. Poulson was commissioned to produce plans for the Complex and formulated a grandiose scheme; one of his plans, produced in September 1970, includes a swimming pool, sports hall, theatres, visual arts and science pavillions, arts studios, arts club, exhibition hall, aviary, restaurant, film theatre and planetarium. In fact, only the swimming pool was built, (although some other parts of the project - facilities for sport - have recently been revived and this provision is now being added to the existing swimming pool development).

Not only was the Arts and Humanities Complex intended to serve "the scientists" - although this was a very important aim - it was also expected to serve the people of Peterlee and the strong emphasis on the arts is reminiscent of Reithian ideas of manipulating recreational and social opportunities for the supposed benefit of the community. It might be considered to be part of an attempt to divert the growing enthusiasm for mass values and national aspirations which were increasingly penetrating the area. These aspirations, with a heavy emphasis on consumerism, form a significant contextual component in this period. Describing these aspirations and ways of life in relation to Cumbernauld, Zweig talks of "Americanization":

"... meaning a certain magnification of the character features of the affluent, consumer-oriented society where the apogee of achievement is the acquisition of new gadgets, new furniture and a new car in a never-ending rat race". (1)

At Peterlee most incomes were insufficient to support such levels of consumption. However, we contend that consumerism was, throughout,

(1) Zweig, 1970, p.64. The process of Americanization is evidently more pervasive in New Towns like Cumbernauld which have experienced considerably greater economic success than Peterlee, suffering high unemployment and offering a narrow range of employment opportunities. Within the North-East, Washington provides the example par excellence of Americanization, together with economic "success".

associated with the New Town's life-style and that it was stimulated, and gained increasing hold, in the 1960s. Furthermore, acquisition became a major basis of popular aspirations even when low incomes prevented the realisation of this vision of "the good life".

The significance of this penetration of mass values is more fully appreciated in a relative context. The New Town was infinitely more susceptible to these values than the villages. The villages were regulated by tradition and clear, occupationally based, status distinctions whereas in Peterlee status had to be established and asserted, often through consumption. A young population, without traditions enforced by mechanisms of social control, was open to mass influences approved of by the "society" rather than the "community". And at a practical level, new homes and new families seemed to require new furniture and so on. The "cosmopolitan" immigrants, the T.V. and the built environment all expressed and stimulated the assumption of the mass values. Peterlee, with its pervasive atmosphere of newness - particularly as demonstrated by its non-traditional housing estates - was evidently consistent with the modernisation ethos of public policy for the region.

This is not to imply, however, that all Peterlee people became concerned with acquisition and modernity. As we remarked, many remained outside these movements by virtue of their low incomes. Some Peterlee families were, and are, very poor indeed whilst others - particularly older residents in the older parts of the town - still retain styles of life more characteristic of the villages. Rather, we argue that the dominant characteristics and concepts of social life had changed since the 1950s and this was reflected both in the facilities people wanted and the kinds of provision they received.

During the 1960s, Peterlee's population doubled, reaching 21,000 by 1970. The provision of social and other facilities did not keep pace with this population growth or the expanding aspirations, demands and needs of Peterlee's residents. Although now the largest settlement in the Rural District, Peterlee was still a long way from becoming the functional urban centre of the area.

Nevertheless, considerable progress was made in developing the town centre. The philosophy that nothing should prejudice the build-up of the centre was revived, to the extent that new estates now received few neighbourhood shops since their residents were to be encouraged to patronise the centre. One effect of this was that mobile shops, a feature of Peterlee since the early days, continued to be useful to those unable to go to the centre, and were used as a substitute for the corner shop.

The first phase of the Corporation's town centre development, adding 80 shops to the existing block of 20 shops, was completed in 1968. The town centre was re-planned as a two-level pedestrian precinct and provided with a large car park, a development fully consistent with the new planning orthodoxy and in line with contemporary predictions of car ownership. The provision of further public buildings and offices, an hotel (1969) and additional shops in the 1970s, enhanced the importance of the town centre. A large department store, opened in 1975, substantially increased its attraction as a shopping centre for the surrounding villages. However, its function is not that of an important social centre; with few social facilities Peterlee town centre is desolate in the evenings after the shops and offices have closed. It presents opportunities for consumption, with an emphasis on "home improvement" and consumer durables - acquisitions which reinforce privatisation; it offers few opportunities for the development of the rich social life envisaged by Reith.

Throughout the 1960s, the inadequacy of social facilities in

Peterlee formed the main publicly-expressed criticism of the town. In part this stemmed from the growth of a teenage population which demanded the kinds of facilities enjoyed in other towns. A survey,⁽¹⁾ conducted in 1966, demonstrated the similarity in outlook and aspiration between Peterlee youth and small-town working-class youth elsewhere. They married young, read the Daily Mirror and Ian Flemming novels and few went to church. In their suggestions for further facilities in Peterlee they listed a ten-pin bowling alley, swimming pool, cinema, ice rink and dance hall. In fact, only the swimming pool was provided - seven years later - and none of their other suggestions came to fruition. The demands of this section of the population were, at least, investigated and were a cause for concern in the context of increasingly frequent reports of vandalism.⁽²⁾

The Corporation, for its part, tackled the problem as far as it was able. A social development officer was appointed in 1962 and provided much-needed assistance and advice to voluntary organisations. But a single officer, with responsibility also for Aycliffe (following the merger of the two Corporations in 1963) inevitably made a limited impact. Secondly, the Corporation succeeded in using its Major Amenity Fund to good effect. In conjunction with Local Authorities, the Fund gave financial support to the construction of the Central Youth Club (1965) the Lowhills Road Sports and Social Centre (1965) and, more recently, a swimming pool (1973). All three projects, however, suffered drawbacks. The youth club was at first

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- (1) Morley (1966); survey undertaken by students of Easington Education Committee's course in Youth Leadership (published jointly by Easington R.D.C. and Peterlee D.C.).
 - (2) E.g. "Sixty trees destroyed in night of vandalism on A19"; Northern Daily Mail, 10.6.65.
 "Now vandals strike at work of art" (a Passmore sculpture); Sunderland Echo, 17.6.65.
 "Vandals smash town centre Christmas tree lights"; Northern Daily Mail, 23.12.65.

oversubscribed and subsequently poorly managed. The Lowhills Road scheme was again one which was badly located on the edge of the town, it never developed as a social centre as intended and membership was restricted to those aged 15 and over. And the swimming pool was needlessly delayed for years while the Corporation persuaded the Rural District Council, major financial contributors to the scheme, to change the original location and thus include it within the grandiose Poulson-designed Arts and Humanities Complex.

But these schemes clearly fulfilled only a small fraction of the social and recreational requirements of the town, let alone the District. The need remained for facilities of the kind which only commercial operators could provide. Throughout the 1960s, the Corporation attempted to interest developers in undertaking various schemes including bowling alleys, cinemas and so on, but repeated announcements that such projects were "in the pipeline" all ended in disappointment when commercial developers withdrew their support. The stumbling block was, and continues to be, the small size of the town - despite its supposed sub-regional role - and, in addition, the unfavourable attitude of developers and operators to substantial capital investment in new entertainment facilities.

During the period, undoubtedly the most significant expansion of social facilities was that of licenced premises. Public houses opened to serve the new estates in the South-West and Howletch areas and also the town centre, bringing the total to seven pubs in the whole town. Three new social clubs - the Roman Catholic, British Legion and Labour clubs - also opened, but this new competition allegedly coupled with mismanagement, forced the closure of the prestigious Workingmen's Club in 1970.⁽¹⁾

(1) Apparently this was the first time in the history of the brewery (Northern Clubs Federation) that a club had suffered financial collapse. The Club's massive debt for its facilities (over £140,000) was primarily the cause of its problems. Its loss of customers also raises questions on this unusual lack of traditional loyalty to the club. The club was revived and reopened in 1976.

Meanwhile the Community Association and its affiliated groups did little more than survive; as the Association's retiring chairman commented in 1970, the town was growing but involvement in the Association's activities was not. Only 2% of Peterlee's population were members of the Association and its affiliated groups.⁽¹⁾ Most of the activities at the community centre were highly specialised, based on the particular interests of dedicated enthusiasts (see Table 5.1). The centre itself was increasingly regarded as a liability by virtue of its inaccessible, peripheral location.⁽²⁾ The Edenhill common room apparently fared no better and in 1963 the Corporation proposed to convert it into a clothing factory. This did not take place - the clothing company withdrew at the last minute - and the common room has survived, its rather inadequate premises now being used mainly for jumble sales. For several years the idea of building such neighbourhood centres seems to have lapsed, revived only recently by the construction of a new centre at Howletch (1976), managed by a newly-formed Community Association.

Finally, a significant developing feature of Peterlee was the growth of supportive institutions of an essentially "urban" type. The recognition of personal and family difficulties as "social problems" led to, and probably necessitated, a response from formal agencies; by contrast with the pit villages where support is typically provided by informal networks within the community. The Women's Voluntary Service was among the first of these agencies followed, in 1965, by the formation of an umbrella body, the Council of Social Service. In the late 1960s, the County Council appointed a Community Development Officer serving the District but based at, and largely

(1) Report of Community Association's A.G.M., Sunderland Echo, 26.3.70.

(2) Eg. Peterlee Women's Institute (formed in 1966) complained of difficulties in obtaining new members and keeping present ones due to "the distance and inconvenience" of getting to the Eden Hill community centre where it held its meetings (Peterlee Chronicle, 13.3.70). The financial difficulties of the Community Association and several other social organisations have been partially alleviated by grant aid, including contributions from the Corporation's paltry "Minor Amenity Fund".

Table 5.1 Activities at Peterlee Community Centre, Eden Hill House,
1976-7

<u>Monday</u>	Playgroup 9.15 - 11.30 a.m. Geriatric Day Centre 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. Karate 7.30 - 10.00 p.m. St. John Ambulance 6.00 - 9.30 p.m.
<u>Tuesday</u>	Playgroup 9.15 - 11.30 a.m. Dressmaking 10.00 - 12 noon (Further Education Class) Solo Club (One parent families) 7.30 - 10.00 p.m. Dancing Club 6.00 - 10.30 p.m.
<u>Wednesday</u>	Mental Health Association 2.00 - 4.00 p.m. Peterlee Emeralds Jazz Band 5.00 - 7.00 p.m. Dog Training Club 7.15 - 10.00 p.m. Camera Club 7.30 - 10.00 p.m. Women's Institute 7.00 - 10.00 p.m.
<u>Thursday</u>	Playgroup 9.15 - 11.30 a.m. Floral Art 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. (Further Education Class) Slimming Club 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. Model Railway Club 7.30 - 10.00 p.m. Indoor Bowls Club 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.
<u>Friday</u>	Playgroup 9.15 - 11.30 a.m. Bridge Club 7.00 - 10.00 p.m. Ladies Club 7.00 - 10.00 p.m. Model Railway Club 7.30 - 10.00 p.m. Indoor Bowls Club 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.
<u>Sunday</u>	Pentecostal Sunday School 2.30 - 3.30 p.m.

Note: This list excludes a number of organisations which meet fortnightly or monthly (e.g. Aquarists Society, Philatelic Society).

Source: Peterlee Community Association information sheet.

concerned with, Peterlee. The Corporation's Social Development Department, substantially reorganised and expanded in 1974, is mainly involved in helping to establish and promote the growth of groups within Peterlee.⁽¹⁾ There also exist a number of organisations, with a variety of affiliations, which seek to identify, locate and help those in difficulty. Of particular interest, because it is indicative of an urban society with weak or inadequate primary support networks (i.e. friends, relatives, neighbours), is "Dial Aid", a telephone switchboard service which makes contact with the old, isolated and lonely.

Having sketched out some of the social components of Peterlee's development, we turn now to the contemporary scene and note some further features, both specific and general, of social life and patterns of life in Peterlee.

(1) For a fuller discussion of the Corporation's Social Development Department see ch. VI, section 2.2.

5. Aspects of contemporary Peterlee

5.1 Social and recreational facilities - provision and access

The present pattern of social provision is characterised, on the one hand, by a concentration of many services in the town centre and on the other hand, the location of some facilities intended to serve the whole of Peterlee at the periphery of the town (Fig. 5.1).

Shopping facilities are highly concentrated in the centre and only the earliest estates (Edenhill, Chapel Hill and Acre Rigg) possess grouped shops of a range sufficient to enable these to be described as neighbourhood centres. In this connection, the 1974 NEAS survey found that one-third of respondents treated the town centre as their "local" shopping centre while 43% of other respondents, served by neighbourhood shops, found these insufficient even to meet their day-to-day needs. 21% made use of mobile shops.

Within the neighbourhoods there are few locally-oriented facilities apart from shops (in some cases) and pubs. There are, however, facilities which are supposed to be for the use of the whole town - the Lowhills Road Sports Centre, Eden Hill House Community Centre and various social clubs - which are awkwardly placed, not only away from the centre but also, in some instances, at the edge of the built-up area. The new town centre sports hall now under construction will help to modify this pattern, while efforts are being made to provide neighbourhood meeting places, shown by the recent provision of Howletch Community Centre and by proposals to develop a centre in the S.W. Area.

It is clear that the spatial distribution of services has a significant bearing on their use, especially because low car ownership and layout tend to reduce personal mobility. In 1974

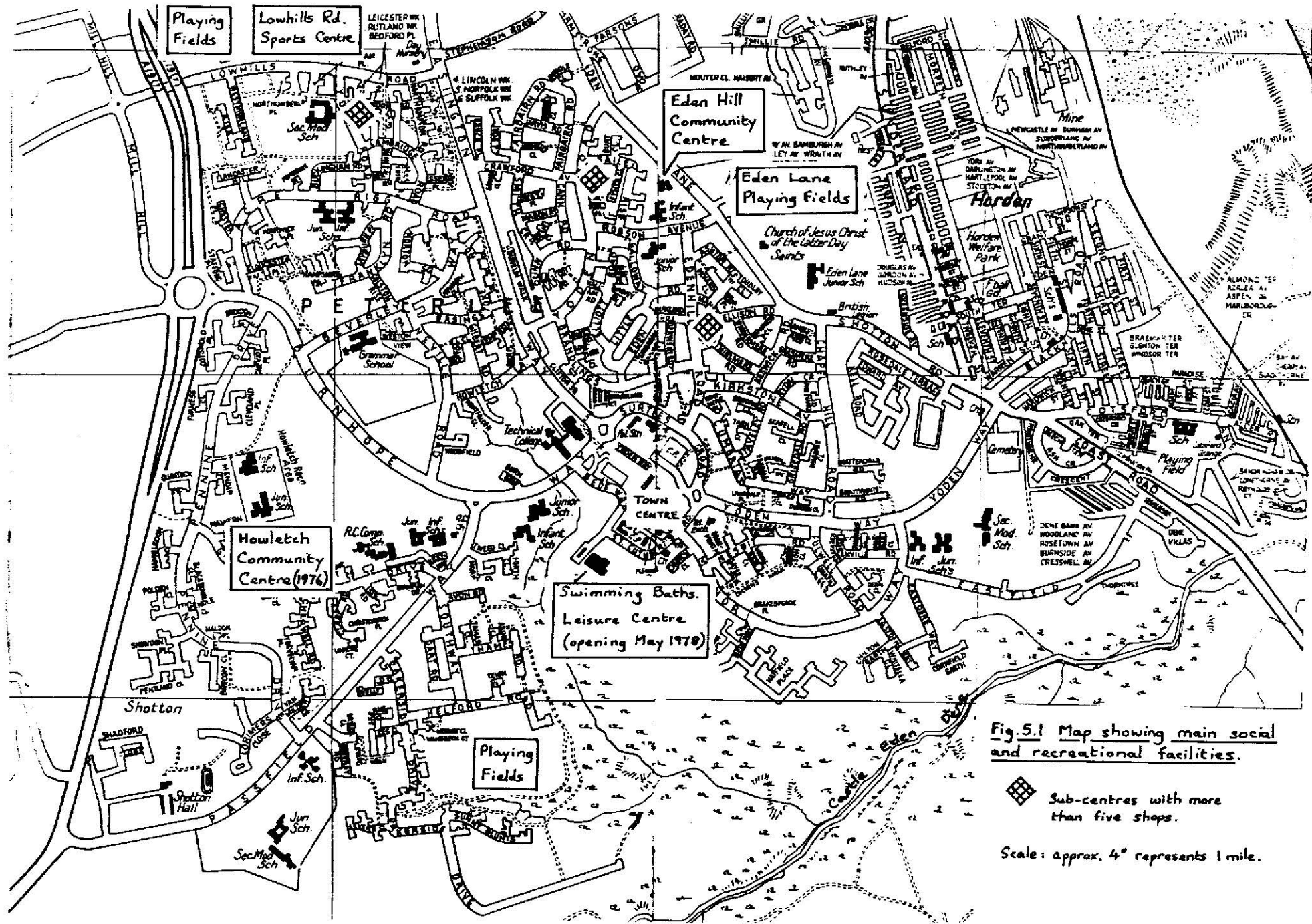


Fig. 5.1 Map showing main social and recreational facilities.



Sub-centres with more than five shops.

Scale: approx. 4" represents 1 mile.

42% of Peterlee households did not have cars (compared with less than 35% in the U.K. as a whole) and, in consequence, many households rely entirely on walking and public transport. During the daytime, when many cars are with their owners at work, the great majority of Peterlee people are without private transport. This suggests that there is a great need, which is currently not adequately met, for locally-provided services - in accordance with the principle of convenience discussed in the Master Plan. Mothers with young children, the old and the handicapped are especially constrained in their mobility and have need of these services.

Movement within the town is not facilitated by an irregular road pattern which exaggerates distances and tends to confuse motorist and pedestrian alike. Much of the movement is channelled along several through-routes which form the edges of estates; people are often unsure of their way through estates other than the one on which they live and may be quite ignorant of other parts of the town. Walking from one part of town to another seems to be discouraged on account of distances added by confusing layouts, uncertainties where footpath systems are disassociated from roads and the generally bleak, unsheltered open-ness characteristic of prairie planning.

Bus services do not compensate for the lack of a car. Whilst access from estates to the town centre by bus is fairly reasonable, access to other parts of Peterlee is not - a factor which tends to discourage visits to those facilities outside the centre.⁽¹⁾ There has long been confusion over the routes followed by buses,⁽²⁾ especially since the New Town's growth has necessitated the repeated revision of routes to include new estates. There is no service

(1) E.g. there is no bus service to Eden Hill Community Centre.

(2) As one reporter put it, "details of the bus services are kept mysteriously hidden. And a familiar sight is a bewildered questioning among the groups which gather at bus stands"; Peterlee Chronicle, 26.4.74.

exclusive to the town itself; all are through services making diversions within Peterlee. Fares are considered to be high⁽¹⁾ and waiting for buses is an unpleasant experience particularly in the town centre where (vandalised) bus shelters serve all routes; a bus station, promised for many years, has never been built. Peterlee does, however, have several well-patronised taxi-firms which provide a reliable but expensive alternative to public transport.

The prospects of Peterlee becoming a centre serving the R.D. area are evidently tied closely to questions of access and transport. In the villages there is an even lower level of car-ownership than in Peterlee; in 1971 only 35% of households in the Easington R.D. villages owned a car, compared with 43% in Peterlee and 62% in England and Wales. The implication is, therefore, that Peterlee's function as a centre for the surrounding villages must depend very heavily upon the adequacy of bus services from the villages to the New Town. In fact, only the three nearest villages - Horden, Easington Village and Shotton Colliery - are within a ten-minute bus journey to Peterlee and are served by buses leaving at intervals of ten minutes or less at peak travelling times. Some of the larger villages, including Wheatley Hill, Wingate and Easington Colliery are almost twenty minutes from Peterlee by bus. Murton, with an hourly service which takes nearly half an hour to reach Peterlee, is especially isolated from the town and is much better connected to Seaham and Sunderland. High fares and inconvenient timing of services (notably of last buses at night) further militate against Peterlee becoming a centre for more than two or three of the surrounding villages.

(1) For a discussion of attitudes to bus services and other aspects of transport provision, as revealed in the 1974 Survey, see Hudson et.al., 1976, ch.7.

5.2 Primary social networks

Mining villages are typically described by sociologists⁽¹⁾ as having dense primary social networks, involving relatively intense interaction between relatives, friends and neighbours, based on continuity, common occupation and the extended family. There is no doubt that this kind of pattern is applicable to the pit villages of east Durham but it does appear that the development of Peterlee has, by generating substantial movements of population, served to weaken these networks. It would also seem that primary networks are less strong in Peterlee than in the villages and, as noted earlier, secondary agencies have a relatively greater part to play in the "urban society" of Peterlee.

However, Peterlee's role has been to rehouse people from the surrounding area and consequently migration has often not involved long-distance moves and frequently has meant that relatives, friends and even neighbours from a village have moved into Peterlee. In the 1974 Survey it was found that a considerable proportion, 43% of respondents, had close relatives also living in the town. Most commonly respondents had brothers and/or sisters living in Peterlee, a feature which reflects the age-specific pattern of migration. Some had parents also in Peterlee or, conversely, had their married children living in the town, and the importance of the "second generation Peterlee" intake is indicative of this. As many as one-fifth of all respondents had parents and/or parents-in-law also living in Peterlee.

But although some of these family networks have been re-established in Peterlee, the New Town is still markedly different

(1) See, for example, Coal is our Life, the classic study of a Yorkshire mining village by Dennis et.al. 1969 and contributions to Bulmer (ed.) 1978.

from the traditional pattern. We do not have comparable data for the villages but a study of "traditional" settlements in the North-East undertaken by Townsend and Taylor (1974) found that 70% of respondents had a close relative living within the same town (c.f. 43% for Peterlee).⁽¹⁾ The supportive role of relatives in Peterlee may also be questioned, since it is more often brothers and sisters rather than parents who live in the town. In addition, it should be noted that the three-generation extended family in Peterlee is rare; the 1974 Survey found that only four out of 199 respondents had grandparents living in the town.

There are, of course, many kinship ties between people in Peterlee and in the surrounding villages. A postal survey of the villages (see Brett, 1976) found that one third of residents sampled in the parishes of Wingate, Haswell and South Hetton and some 57% of those in Horden had relatives living in Peterlee. It was reported that, in many cases, contact was maintained - although our recent work suggests that these relationships were considerably affected by distance and the difficulties of travelling. Interviews conducted in "Hutton Crescent" indicated that many of those with relatives in the villages were able to make visits once a week or less frequently and that it was difficult to make the necessary travelling arrangements to enable a mother to babysit for her daughter, for example.⁽²⁾

Nearly half the Peterlee respondents to the 1974 Survey said that most of their friends lived within the town, again a proportion well below that recorded for older parts of Washington (73%) and the

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- (1) The comparable figure for the old parts of Washington New Town (formerly pit villages) was 68% - see Hudson *et.al.*, 1976, ch.8.
 (2) These observations stem from interviews conducted by the author in "Hutton Crescent", Peterlee during July 1977 as part of an ongoing project in the Sociology Dept., University of Durham.

areas surveyed by Townsend and Taylor. Although age-specific migration processes can mean that friends move into Peterlee from the villages it is clear that many friends may be left behind. There is evidence that relationships with old friends, as well as relatives, in the villages are maintained by Peterlee people. One indication of this is that it was found that a large number of Peterlee respondents still visited the villages, keeping up old social ties by going to pubs and workingmen's clubs there.⁽¹⁾

Neighbouring constitutes the third strand in the primary social network and is perhaps one of the most useful indicators of the indigenous social development of the New Town since, being place-bound, neighbouring must start from scratch; these are newly-forged relationships and not existing relationships dislocated by movement from the villages (or elsewhere) into Peterlee. Survey evidence does not suggest that neighbouring relationships are, in general, of great significance in Peterlee. Although half of the respondents had made a home visit to a neighbour within the previous week, it was not felt that neighbours were particularly helpful. 30% thought that neighbours "helped each other", 23% conceded that help was sometimes given and 44% considered that neighbours "kept themselves to themselves". More people thought that their neighbours in Peterlee kept themselves to themselves than did respondents in the two other New Towns and it is of interest to note, in keeping with our earlier comments (section 4.2) on the "pioneering spirit", that perceived helpfulness was greatest in the newest New Town, Washington.

(1) Respondents were asked to name the location of the last pub/hotel and the last workingmen's club they had visited. Of those who had last visited a pub/hotel in the sub-region, two-thirds named places in Peterlee and one-third in the R.D. villages. Of local visits to clubs, more than half the visits had been made to clubs at Horden and Blackhall. (See Hudson et.al., 1976, v.II, Tables 8.10 and 8.11).

Further work, including studies of the villages, is required to examine in detail the changes which have taken place in these small-scale social networks and to pinpoint differences between Peterlee and the villages. Evidence currently available does, however, point to some disruption of primary ties as a result of migration and the development of weaker, less dense primary networks in Peterlee than in the villages, an outcome which reinforces and reflects the contrast between the "traditional" styles of life in the villages and the "modern" society created in the New Town. The processes by which these changes have occurred and this contrast produced are intricate and interrelated, including not only the development of Peterlee but also the decline of mining and the penetration of the values of the wider society. But the planned re-structuring of the physical environment of the area, entailing the growth of Peterlee and the decline of the villages, has in itself brought profound changes in social life and relationships. As one resident of "Hutton Crescent", born and bred in Hesleden, commented:

"Peterlee's nothing like the colliery villages; there's no warmth, no friendliness in the place. In the villages everyone knows everyone else - they'd lived there all their lives. Here you don't know who your neighbours are - and you don't bother with them.... We had to come to Peterlee; we were rehoused from Hesleden.... Hesleden was a canny place - until they pulled the houses down...."

5.3 "Social problems"

To conclude this discussion we note some of the "social problems" currently identified in Peterlee by the agencies and individuals met during the course of this research. These problems are highly complex and we attempt to do no more than outline their character and suggest their relative significance.

Unemployment, especially amongst men, is undoubtedly at the root of many of the personal and family difficulties experienced by Peterlee people. Hardship is evident in many cases, contrasting markedly with the consumer-oriented lifestyle of Peterlee which provides an environment discouraging cheap solutions; there are, for instance, no second-hand shops in the New Town. It is difficult to judge the extent of these problems but information relating to rent rebates and Supplementary Benefits suggest that at least half of Peterlee's households suffer some degree of financial hardship. In 1975-6, 2,014 of the Corporation's 6,748 tenants qualified for and received rent rebates on account of their low incomes and nearly 1,000 tenants had their rents paid directly by the Supplementary Benefits Commission.⁽¹⁾

Financial hardship and the hopelessness of unemployment places pressures on the family which is often ill-equipped to deal with them and lacks the support of primary networks and secondary social agencies. In very broad terms the New Town situation is one where "the wisdom of the family is vested solely in young parents with high expectations and little experience" in an environment which is "almost clinically antiseptic, unsympathetic and under-supported by social workers."⁽²⁾ The move to the New Town may itself generate financial problems:

"The majority of families moving to a new community do so for housing reasons. Many may never have had a separate house before and, if earnings are lower than in the area from which the families have moved there can be acute budgeting problems. Hire purchase, although a most useful

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- (1) Peterlee Development Corporation, Annual Report, 1976, p.277.
 (2) Hall-Turner, 1976, pp. 436-7. This article outlines a research project being undertaken by a medical practitioner on "New Town Blues", a syndrome referred to as "social fibrillation".

device for spreading over a period the payment for household goods, can easily become burdensome. We think it is necessary to underline the financial problems facing families moving to a new community. The cost of the move, of furnishing a new house, of travelling back to their former area to see relatives and friends, and possibly of higher rents and shopping bills; all these may add up to a serious problem." (1)

Despite the Corporation's initial stated intentions, Peterlee does not seem to offer an environment especially conducive to the maintenance and cohesion of the family. Reports of violence within families are by no means uncommon, nor is family breakdown and separation. A very rough indication of the latter is given by the census which showed that, in 1971, 5.8% of Peterlee families with children were incomplete (i.e. without one of the parents as a result of death, divorce, separation etc.) as compared with a figure of 2.6% for the surrounding villages. The concentration of young married couples in Peterlee, without the stabilising influence of older people, arguably serves to weaken family structures; informal systems of support and social control mechanisms are lacking.

The under-provision of social facilities essential to Peterlee creates additional pressures and problems. Perhaps one of the most serious deficiencies is in day care facilities for pre-school children. Peterlee has only one day nursery, opened in 1974, which provides 50 places. Only 86 places in playgroups, together with 8 registered childminder places, were available in 1974. At the same time many mothers have to go out to work for financial reasons and this has been encouraged by the success of efforts to attract female-employing industry. Even in comparison with low regional and national standards, this provision is hopelessly inadequate, particularly bearing in mind

(1) Ministry of Housing and Local Government, The Needs of New Communities, 1967, p.21.

that alternative sources of care by grandparents are often not available when migration has separated the larger family.

The lack of facilities for teenagers, together with a shortage of job opportunities when they leave school also creates difficulties, both for individuals and the town as a whole. 63% of respondents to the 1974 Survey thought that Peterlee experienced a lot of vandalism⁽¹⁾ which, it can be argued, is symptomatic of insufficient social provision. Social life in Peterlee is considered unsatisfactory and is no doubt unsatisfying for many teenagers. One 16-year old youth, working at a Peterlee factory, said that he and his friends "just go to the town centre and hang around the youth club or outside the fish and chip shop; there are always fights and the police come over". Since he had left school he was unable to go to social functions at the school and he was too young to visit pubs legally. He bemoaned the fact that Peterlee did not have a cafe which stayed open at night: "you just want a coffee bar for young lads with a juke box in". Since there was "nothing in Peterlee", his ambition was to own a car and so be able to find a social life in Sunderland and Newcastle.

A more general problem, confronting many people in Peterlee is social isolation, resulting in loneliness. This and related problems are symptoms of the failure of social networks and the lack of activities and facilities. The broader problem could perhaps be described as social "underdevelopment" and may be indicated by the fact that 64% of respondents to the 1974 Survey felt that their part of town lacked "community spirit", or by the finding that many were

(1) Figures presented in a report prepared by Washington Development Corporation (1971) show that Peterlee does in fact suffer a high degree of vandalism in comparison with other areas. In December 1970 a much larger number of cases - shown as a percentage of total population - were reported in Peterlee (1.25%) than in Aycliffe (0.29%), Roker, Sunderland (0.42%) or Washington (0.47%).

not really "attached" to Peterlee (ch. III, section 3.3.e) and that a substantial minority were cut off from primary social interaction. Gradually the specific problem of loneliness has come to be recognised by various agencies and the efforts of Dial Aid and of Age Concern, which is attempting to develop a visiting scheme, are evidence of this awareness.

Several other issues could be identified and included within a list of Peterlee's social problems. But to a great extent these can be traced back to the broad social consequences of the New Town's development. In summary, it appears that the development of Peterlee has had the effect of largely destroying "traditional" styles of life born of economic necessity - yet at the same time has only partially removed the conditions to which they were a response and, in turn has produced new social problems. It is clear that there continues to be a great divergence between the image and the reality of the "new society" established at Peterlee.

6. Concluding comment

The initial social objectives formulated for Peterlee included some of the idealistic conceptions of the Reith Committee. A wide range of social facilities was to be provided, a sense of community fostered and a satisfying family and social life was to be encouraged to develop. In the short term Peterlee could not become a balanced community because of its local role; it was to be a new community for miners, providing them with a "better" way of life than was available in the pit villages. The New Town would offer improved housing conditions and a much broader range of opportunities for social life, consequently men would not be tempted to leave the area and leave mining. It was also hoped that Peterlee, by serving as a new urban centre for the villages, would improve opportunities in the sub-region as a whole. There was some concern, at the early planning stage, that Peterlee should not appear alien to the area and hence that some social and cultural aspects of the locality should be retained in the town.

But these somewhat abstract aims had to be subjugated to other policies and even abandoned in the light of changing circumstances. Plans for social facilities had to take account of mining arrangements. It was difficult to attract developers to undertake social provision and the Corporation itself was able to contribute little. And by the 1960s it became clear that Peterlee could not function only as a miners' town.

Wider social changes also cast doubts on the validity and relevance of the Reith Committee's ideas. At first, there was an upsurge of enthusiasm for social activities, stimulated by the keen interest of the Peterlee pioneers. This faded, however, and the T.V. set took the place of the Community Centre as a source of

entertainment. The new aspirations of consumerism gradually replaced the more simple pleasures envisaged by Reith. Peterlee was perhaps becoming too large to reproduce the sense of community which the Reith Committee and the Corporation had hoped to foster, yet it was also too small to support a cinema, let alone an art gallery or a theatre. The Corporation was unable to intervene to meet growing demands for social facilities; here the point raised by Wirtz serves to stress the nature of the priorities of Corporations and, more generally, the State. Advance factories (initially rent-free) are deemed legitimate expenditure; social facilities are not. Experience has shown that Local Authorities and other agencies may be unwilling or unable to provide much-needed facilities and the failure of Central Government to do more than make the token gesture which the Major Amenity Fund represents, suggests that New Towns are barely considered an instrument of social policy.

Although Peterlee's initial social objectives may have been overtaken by events, there is little evidence to suggest that the Corporation has developed new objectives or, indeed, formulated a social policy. It is still the case, as the Central Housing Advisory Committee noted ten years ago, that "too often, 'social aspects' are considered only when 'problems' arise". As we demonstrate in the next chapter, the Corporation's concerns seem to centre largely on management and economic issues; there are few vestiges of the Reithian idealism or a social vision.

(1) The Needs of New Communities, 1967, p.3.

CHAPTER VI

PETERLEE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

CHAPTER VI

PETERLEE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the structure, powers, functions and external relationships of Peterlee Development Corporation. We maintain that the Corporation is a remote bureaucracy, operating in comparative isolation and with a considerable degree of autonomy; for these reasons this account is necessarily an incomplete attempt to critically describe the Corporation.

The first part of the chapter (section 2) focusses upon the organisational structure of the Corporation. Comment is made on the composition of the Board, the staff structure and the Corporation's finances. The latter part of the chapter (section 3) describes the Corporation's relationship with Central Government, the Local Authorities and the people of Peterlee. A broadly-based and critical perspective on the Corporation is built up, leading the account towards our final chapter which provides a summary assessment of the development of Peterlee.

2. Peterlee Development Corporation - structure, functions and finance

2.1 The Corporation Board

When a New Town Designation Order has been confirmed by the Minister,⁽¹⁾ a Development Corporation is constituted and Members of the Corporation Board are appointed. The Board may comprise up to thirteen Members,⁽²⁾ one of whom is named as Chairman and another as his Deputy. Membership is a part-time job and Members receive a salary for their work.⁽³⁾ Appointments are made for terms of two or four years; thereafter Membership may be renewed at the Minister's discretion.

The Board is responsible for appointing Corporation staff and directing their work, formulating broad policies and, to an extent, serving as the Minister's local agent. The appointment of Members is entirely a Ministerial responsibility, although it is customary for the Minister to consult with the Chairman of a Corporation before ordinary Members are chosen. It is far from clear on what basis appointments are made, but it is frequently said that Members are chosen for their experience and competence, not their party political allegiance. The New Towns Act (sch. 2.1) states merely that "the Minister shall have regard to the desirability of securing the services of one or more persons resident in, or having special

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- (1) The term "Minister" is used throughout to refer to the Minister responsible for the New Towns - currently the Secretary of State for the Environment, previously the Minister of Housing and Local Government and initially, in the 1940s, the Minister for Town and Country Planning.
 - (2) The Membership limit was raised from 9 to 13 under the New Towns (Amendment) Act, 1976.
 - (3) Salaries are calculated on the basis of two days' service a week by Chairmen and one day a week by other Members. In 1973 Chairmen received £3,600 p.a., Deputy Chairmen, £1,500 p.a. and Members, £700 p.a. (source: Thirteenth Report from the Expenditure Committee, 1975, v.II, p.20).

knowledge of, the locality in which the new town will be situated". In practice, the Minister usually does choose at least one or two local people to serve on the Board and when such appointments are made the Local Authorities may be invited to put forward nominees. In many other cases, however, Members are selected from an internal list of suitable candidates - "the good and the great" - compiled by the Ministry, and "such Local Authorities as appear to him to be concerned" are informed of the appointments and invited to submit their "observations".

One Corporation Chairman, Mr. Wyndham Thomas of Hemel Hempstead, surmised that the Minister seeks "to include a good range of professional, commercial and public service experience, and in recent years there has been a marked increase in the appointment of local councillors".⁽¹⁾ Certainly, many Board Members bring considerable experience to Corporations and many are prominent figures in public life. They are disqualified from membership of the House of Commons, but otherwise free to take up or retain positions with public or private sector enterprises. The recent increase in the number of councillors serving on Corporation Boards should be interpreted as an attempt by the Ministry to strengthen relations with Local Authorities, rather than as a means to inject an element of local democracy. Councillors appointed as Board Members are not expected to represent their Councils or their electorate but rather to serve the interests of the Corporation and, ultimately, the Minister.⁽²⁾ We argue that, in practice, the aim is to secure an institutional connection, fostering co-operation between Corporation and Councils and not to challenge the independence of Corporations from local popular pressures.

(1) Thomas, 1972, p.46.

(2) See also Schaffer, 1972, p.57.

The changing composition of the Corporation Board at Peterlee provides a further dimension to the development history we have discussed and illustrates, by example, the nature of a Corporation Board as well as the Minister's choice of Members.

A few months before the designation of Peterlee, the Minister had convened an Advisory Committee, all the members of which were subsequently appointed to the Corporation Board, established in March 1948. Dr. Monica Felton, a former member of the Reith Committee and previously Deputy Chairman at Stevenage, was appointed Chairman at Peterlee. There were seven other Members (see Appendix) only two of whom were, in a strict sense, local people - Councillor H. O'Neill, an R.D.C. member and Mrs. J.W. Gray, wife of the R.D.C.'s clerk. Two others served on local councils elsewhere in the County (Councillor H.F. Lee and Alderman E. Robinson). Administrative expertise was provided by Lt. Col. Sir Myers Wayman, a distinguished businessman and former Mayor of Sunderland. Mr. E. Allen, Reader in economics at Durham University and Mr. J.R. MacKay, a chartered accountant were also appointed to the Peterlee Board.

At this time, it is clear that Dr. Felton almost entirely dominated the Corporation and also became the focus of attention for the public and the press, while other Members and the General Manager were relatively inconspicuous. Dr. Felton, who took up residence at Shotton Hall, the Corporation's headquarters, and spent much of her time talking to local groups, was probably the most active Chairman in the Corporation's history. She was committed, temperamental and dogmatic and met with opposition both within the Corporation and in her relationships with local councillors. She had to contend with

the dual handicap of being an outsider and a woman in an isolated, inward-looking area where politics was a masculine preserve. As a result of "intrigue" - "there was all kinds of intrigue to get her out" - together with male chauvinism on the part of people who "didn't want a female ruling the roost", Felton was transferred from Peterlee, returning to Stevenage as Chairman in October 1949.⁽¹⁾ Two years later she was removed from this position by the Minister, Hugh Dalton, when she returned from a visit to North Korea during the Korean War and spoke of the atrocities perpetrated by the Americans. Dr. Felton's revelations met with savage criticism in the press and in the Commons and she became one of the very few Corporation Chairmen to be dismissed - not for incompetence but for political reasons.

Even before Dr. Felton left Peterlee several changes had taken place in the Board's composition. Wayman had resigned during 1948 on account of ill-health and in early 1949 Mrs. J.W. Gray and Mr. J.R. MacKay left - and the press hinted that this was connected with internal disagreements in the Corporation. New Members were chosen to replace those who had left: Mr. F.D. Nicholson, Managing Director of Vaux Breweries in Sunderland; Mr. T. Howarth, Chief Accountant for the Port of London Authority and Mr. C.S. Robinson, Chairman of I.C.I. These appointments served only to inflame the rapidly deteriorating relationship between the Corporation and Easington R.D.C. Councillor Henderson of the R.D.C. declared that he was "surprised" that, in view of the Council's concern to obtain increased representation on the Corporation Board, the Minister had had "the audacity to flout the Council and its wishes". He

(1) These comments on Dr. Felton's personality and the factors surrounding her demise from Peterlee are based on an account given by a former close acquaintance, Mrs. McManners of Easington (A.P.P. interview, 4.4.76).

continued:

"The Minister was still acting under a spirit of autocracy which the Council as democrats hoped would not be allowed to function much longer. It was difficult to understand an individual who had been reared in the tradition of the Labour Party acting in such a manner. He deprecated the appointment of persons who might not even be in favour of the New Towns Act and he considered that the Council should protest against this type of individual being appointed. The proposed appointments were an affront to the Council and to all the individual members of the Labour Party in the County of Durham." (1)

But the Council's protests were ineffective. Silkin defended his choice; he felt that there was "a pretty good representation of local knowledge and business experience on the Board" and that "the last thing to do is to run this Corporation as a political concern". (2)

Lord Beveridge, who had been Chairman of Aycliffe Development Corporation since its inception in 1947, was appointed Chairman of Peterlee as well after Dr. Felton returned to Stevenage. Perhaps the Minister had thought that such a distinguished and respected man would prove locally acceptable and be able to smooth over fraught relationships. Instead, Easington R.D.C. were angry that the Minister should regard the Chairmanship of Peterlee as "a part-time job", especially since nothing had been built. It appears that Beveridge, who had been working hard at Aycliffe and had even moved into a Corporation house there, was unable to give enough time to directing and dealing with the problems of Peterlee. Relieved of the dominance of the Chairman, the General Manager and his staff at Peterlee increasingly took control of the Corporation and the Board declined in importance. Ad hoc management decision-making by the staff was largely divorced from policies formulated by the Board.

(1) Easington R.D.C., minutes, 18.8.49.

(2) Report in Newcastle Journal, 2.9.49.

When Beveridge came to the end of his two-year term at Peterlee, the recently-installed Conservative Government appointed Alderman F.C. Pette in his place, in January 1952. This was not a party political appointment in that Pette had risen through the ranks in the Co-operative movement and had been a Labour member and Mayor of Middlesbrough Town Council. Although Pette was the most "local" of Peterlee's Chairmen, his appointment brought objections from Durham County Council which resented the fact that an outsider, rather than a Durham politician, had been chosen.

By 1955 only two of the original (1948) Members remained: Mr. H.F. Lee and Councillor H. O'Neill. Mr. C.S. Robinson, Chairman of I.C.I., served on the Peterlee Board until 1955 and was Chairman at Aycliffe from 1953-63. Councillor T.H. Summerson, a prominent businessman and regional notable, also held a place on the Aycliffe Board for many years but served as a Member at Peterlee for two years (1954-5). Mr. S.A. Sadler-Forster, Chairman of North-East Trading Estates Ltd., was a Board Member at Peterlee until 1958, when the Corporation began to pursue its own industrial development programme. We do not possess biographical details for the two other Members at this time, Mr. E. Moore and Mrs. T. Denholm.

Colonel H.H. Peile succeeded Pette as Corporation Chairman in 1957. Given the historical background in east Durham this appointment was somewhat ironic for Peile and his family had been major coal-owners in the region, operating Priestman Collieries Ltd., of which Col. Peile had been managing director. After Nationalization, Peile had retained and gained directorships in several important concerns within the North-East and held the Chairmanship of the Weardale Lead Co., an I.C.I. subsidiary. Peile was the longest-serving Chairman at Peterlee and his eleven years in this position (1957-68) witnessed pit closures and the consequent re-definition

of Peterlee's industrial aims, in addition to the debacle of Milton Hindle's bankruptcy and the Queen's visit in 1960. And throughout this period Peile, like his predecessor, appears not to have become well-known in Peterlee; according to the evidence of contemporary newspapers, Peile made few public appearances and the Corporation was almost always publicly represented by the General Manager, A.V. Williams.

At a time when the County's planning strategy for the villages (the Easington Town Map) was being prepared and contested, the appointment of the County Council's Chairman, Ald. W. Baines as Deputy Chairman at Peterlee provided a useful link between the County and the Corporation. Ald. Baines held this position from 1957 until his death in 1964. The early 1960s saw the demise of the two surviving Members of the original Corporation Board. Councillor H. O'Neill left in 1961 and was replaced by Councillor R. Taylor, a Peterlee businessman and Labour Party stalwart who represented the New Town area on the County Council. Mr. H.F. Lee, formerly of Seaham U.D.C., left the Peterlee Board in 1963.

For several years strong connections had existed between Peterlee and its sister New Town, Aycliffe and several Members had served on both Boards. In 1963, the Minister formalised this link by establishing a joint Board to administer both New Towns. Peterlee received the lion's share of the reconstituted Board, since five of its eight Members had previously served at Peterlee and Peile was retained as Chairman. Only one Member, Councillor R. Taylor of Peterlee, actually lived in one of the New Towns and almost all the others lived in the rural parts of the region. All were prominent figures in public life with, for the most part, important political and/or business connections.

The return of a Labour Government in 1964 signalled major changes in Board membership, with appointments which strongly suggest party political motives. Two Labour councillors, J.B. Davison and D. Vickers, together with a Labour alderman, A. Cunningham, were appointed in 1965. Hence, of the nine Members, four were Labour representatives in local government (Taylor, Davison, Vickers and Cunningham). Links with Durham County Council were provided by Taylor and Cunningham, whilst Davison served to re-establish a connection with Easington R.D.C.

Miss E.S. Riley-Lord left the Board in 1967, followed by Col. Peile and Mr. H.S. Tegner in 1968. Councillor Nunn of Shildon U.D.C. was subsequently appointed and Mr. T. Dan Smith became Chairman in 1968. There was now a strong Labour majority on the Board. These various appointments had created a Board which comprised some of the most powerful local and regional politicians - in contrast with the Board of a few years earlier which had consisted of a varied assortment of "worthies". The Minister's choice was clearly in keeping with Central Government's increasing recognition of regional politics and politicians, evidence for which may be seen in the establishment of regional Economic Planning Councils and in the personal career of T. Dan Smith.⁽¹⁾

Smith, a charismatic and media-conscious personality, cast in the role of regional saviour, appears to have become fairly widely known in Peterlee. He was by no means averse to publicity; indeed, he seems to have regarded P.R. techniques as an integral part of politics. In view of this, it is not surprising that his efforts at Peterlee were directed towards the promotion of the Science Centre scheme, which kept the New Town, the Corporation and Smith himself constantly

(1) As presented in his autobiography (1970).

in the headlines. However, there is little to suggest that the Corporation, dominated by Labour politicians and anxious for publicity, was any more sensitive to the concerns of Peterlee's residents than it had been in the past.

Smith "temporarily withdrew" from the Chairmanship in 1970, pending the outcome of the Spoorle corruption trial in Wandsworth, in which allegations were made against him. Although charges against Smith were dismissed he did not return to Peterlee. Mr. R.D. Appleton, his Deputy, served as acting Chairman until the appointment of Mr. H.D. Stevenson in November 1971.

Mr. H.D. Stevenson, Peterlee's current Chairman, was appointed by Mr. Peter Walker, Secretary of State for the Environment in the recently-installed Conservative Government. Walker later wrote⁽¹⁾ that his intention had been to make "an imaginative appointment" to Aycliffe and Peterlee New Town (sic), a town which "had its problems" and "with which T. Dan Smith had been closely associated".⁽²⁾

"I chose Dennis Stevenson, not for any party reasons.... but because I had immensely admired a piece of research he had done on the problems of young West Indians in London. After reading this I asked to meet him, and was much impressed by his vigour, vitality, and passion to be of public service and to help particularly those who were deprived".

Walker notes that he informed the Prime Minister of his choice of the twenty-six year old Stevenson as Chairman and was then asked to confirm that a typing error had been made and that Stevenson's age was, in fact, sixty-two. Stevenson was summoned to meet Ted Heath, to whom he had to admit his limited knowledge of the North-East. Heath then

- (1) The Ascent of Britain by Peter Walker, 1977, pp.61-2 (from which the following quotes are taken). This provides a rare (as well as remarkable) insight into the way in which such an appointment is made and for this reason is quoted at some length here.
- (2) It is somewhat disconcerting that the former Minister appears to be unaware of the fact that Peterlee and Aycliffe are separate towns but with a joint Corporation Board.

pointed to a painting of "a typical Durham miner with his cloth cap, his back to the viewer slumped at a typical public bar of a Durham pub... the surroundings were fairly grim, the background bleak".

"The Prime Minister turned to Dennis Stevenson and said 'That's the north-east. If I appoint you as chairman of Peterlee New Town do you think that you can see that that man and his children have a rather better quality of life in the future than he and his family had in the past?' The surprised Dennis Stevenson stuttered that it would be marvellous if he could. 'Well', said the Prime Minister, 'you had better get on with it'."

It is evident that in the light of previous practice this was indeed an "imaginative appointment". Unlike his predecessors, Stevenson has no connections with the region and is not prominent in politics or business. His appointment represented a firm break with the past - a break which could be considered essential to maintain some degree of credibility for the Corporation, enabling it to survive the Poulson scandals which entailed the imprisonment of two former Board Members, Smith and Cunningham, on corruption charges in 1974.⁽¹⁾

Four new appointments to the Board have been made since Stevenson became Chairman and the relatively high level of Local Authority representation established in the mid-1960s has been maintained. In 1977, five of the nine Members were councillors both from the Peterlee and Aycliffe areas. Two of the councillors, Horsfield and Taylor (the Board's longest-serving Member) actually live in Peterlee. Local Authority representation has recently been strengthened by the addition of Councillor Short, leader of the Labour Group on Easington District Council. The Minister and the Corporation have successfully made belated efforts to foster greater co-operation between the Corporation and the District Council in order to ease the housing transfer.

(1) According to evidence presented at the Poulson trial, Peterlee did not represent a major part of the Poulson empire, built up in the 1960s with the assistance of Smith and Cunningham. Prosecuting counsel said, however, that Smith had "exerted an influence" on the Corporation with the result that Poulson was appointed consultant for the Arts and Humanities Complex. (See also Robinson, 1975b, pp. 54-61).

The Board meets monthly at Peterlee.⁽¹⁾ In addition to Members, the Corporation's chief officers, including the General Manager, are present. A typical meeting comprises the submission of reports by the Chairman, General Manager, senior officers and the General Purposes and Finance Committee. Minutes are also received from other committees, including those concerned with housing (Housing and Joint Allocation Committees), liaison with other authorities (Liaison and Joint Consultative Committees) and the management of Castle Eden Dene (Castle Eden Dene Scientific Advisory Committee). Minutes of the Board Meetings are confidential and circulated only within the Corporation; they are not normally available to Local Authorities, other agencies or individuals.⁽²⁾ Only since 1974 has the Board adopted the practice of holding press conferences after meetings and thus making public some of its decisions - although often revealing few details and rarely noting the reasons behind a chosen course of action.

In addition to attending Board meetings some Members also serve on certain Corporation committees. But it is difficult to gauge, in general terms, the extent to which Members participate in Corporation decision-making and in policy formulation. It would appear that the balance of power between Members and staff has varied and that at present the Board plays a relatively active role, not least because Stevenson is a fairly vigorous Chairman and the Corporation is no longer dominated by its General Manager (as in the past).

Beyond this, it is necessary to raise doubts concerning the abilities of the Board to direct Corporation affairs (and effect change) and, moreover, to question the validity of the institution

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- (1) Members do, in fact, meet together fortnightly, alternately at Aycliffe and Peterlee, dealing with matters relating to each New Town at separate meetings.
- (2) The author was exceptionally privileged in being granted access to Board minutes.

itself. As we have shown, there have been repeated changes in membership and this must prevent the build-up of experience, with the result that the Board must abdicate responsibilities and depend upon the expertise of Corporation officers. The abilities of the Board also seem likely to be weakened by the fact that it serves two New Towns; here we suggest that councillors from the Aycliffe area can only make a limited contribution to discussion on Peterlee affairs, and vice-versa.

It may be argued that the relationship between Board Members and staff is similar in nature to that between Councillors and staff within Local Authorities. This, however, is untrue since it ignores the fact that the Corporation is an undemocratic body; its Members are appointed, not elected, and are responsible only to the Minister. This is a fundamental point, since it has important implications for the way in which a Corporation conducts its affairs. In section 3 below we examine these implications and question the relevance of the Corporation structure in the practice of New Town development.

2.2 Corporation staff and departmental structure

The Corporation Board is responsible for the appointment of staff. The staff is led by the General Manager, the Corporation's chief executive⁽¹⁾ who watches over and, to an extent, controls the work of the various departments. He works closely with the Chairman and with the Board and it is his concern to ensure the implementation of Board policy and provide a channel of communication between Board and staff.

(1) In 1973 an attempt was made to change the title of Peterlee's General Manager to "Managing Director", but this was found to cause confusion. He was subsequently re-named "Chief Executive" (in accord with current Local Authority practice) but this was also rejected and the traditional title re-introduced.

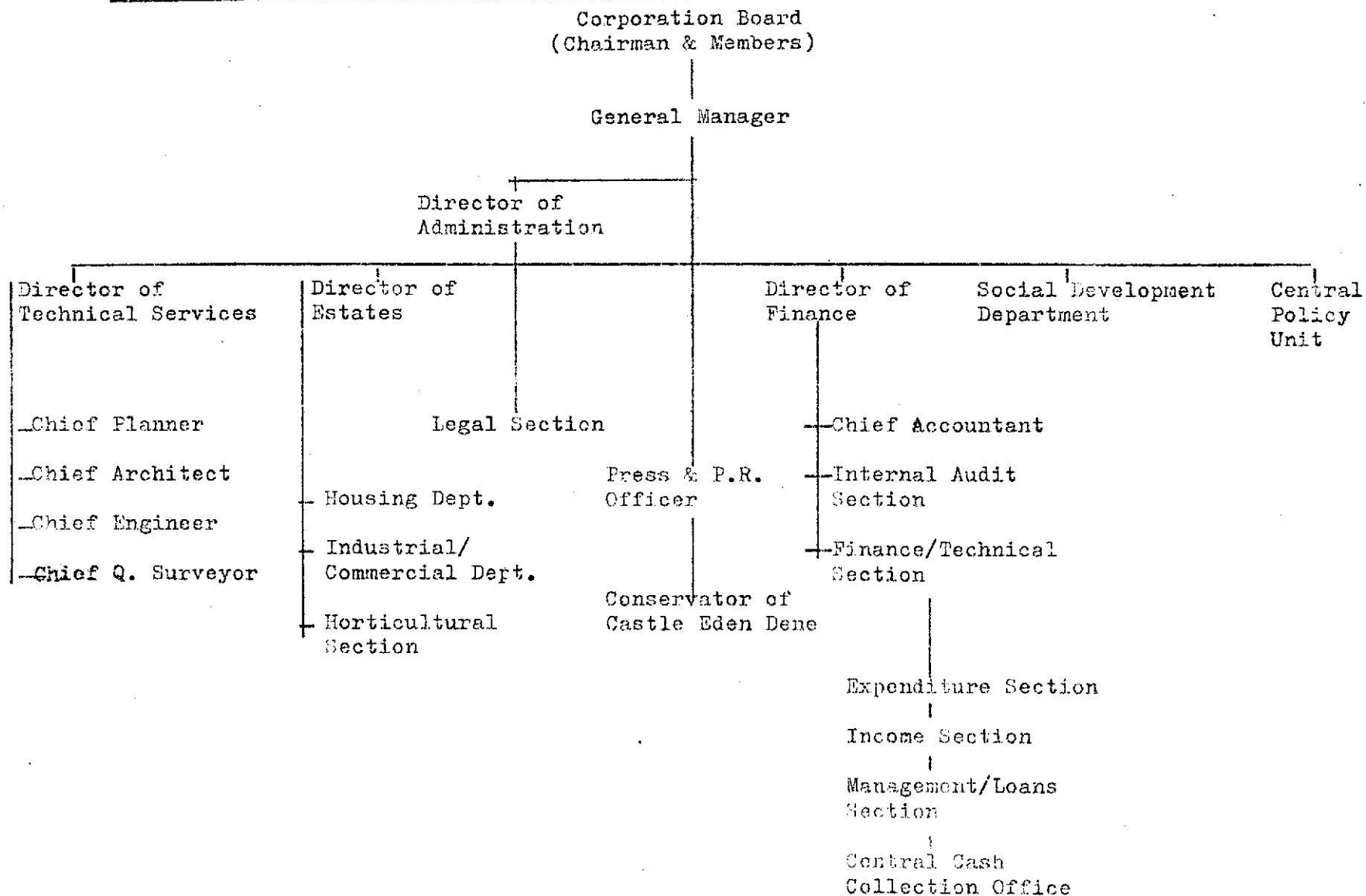
General Managers have come from a variety of backgrounds; the first appointments, in the early days of the New Towns programme apparently included "a knighted ex-Indian civil servant, three major-generals, one brigadier, four lawyers, three engineers and a chartered surveyor."⁽¹⁾ Mr. A.V. Williams, General Manager at Peterlee from 1948 until 1974, was one of those who had received a legal training and, prior to his appointment at Peterlee, had been one of the youngest Town Clerks in the country. After his retirement he was succeeded by Mr. G. Philipson, a former colonial administrator who had been Secretary of the New Towns Association, a secretariat supported by Corporation Chairmen which acts as a lobby representing the interests of New Town Corporations.

At Peterlee the General Manager himself maintains only a small department, which includes a Press and Public Relations Officer and the Conservator of Castle Eden Dene (see Fig. 6.1). It is understood that in recent years the General Manager has sought to increase his concern with broad policy issues and reduce his involvement with matters of day-to-day management. For this reason the role of the Director of Administration was widened in 1975 and the Director became, in practice, the General Manager's "right hand man", responsible for the general supervision of Corporation departments. The Legal Section, which deals with land conveyancing, planning law and so on is the only section within the Director of Administration's department.

The largest and, in many respects, the most important part of the Corporation is the Estates Department, which manages and maintains housing, industrial and commercial assets. It employs almost one-third

(1) McComb, 1974, p.11. For brief biographies of General Managers in 1973 see Expenditure Committee, 13th Report, 1975, v.II; memo. from DOE, pp. 30-2.

Fig.6.1 Peterlee Development Corporation:Structure.



of the Corporation's administrative staff as well as the majority of the manual staff, the latter principally engaged on housing maintenance and the upkeep of landscaped areas (through the Horticultural Section). The Estates Department was substantially re-organised and expanded in 1975, mainly in order to improve its capabilities in industrial promotion and development.

The Industrial/Commercial Department is responsible for attracting new industrial firms to the town and finding tenants for the Corporation's commercial properties. Promotional work is undertaken and contacts are made with industry; the Corporation develops factories, makes housing available for key-workers, helps to negotiate regional aid grants and so on. The Corporation's service to firms moving to Peterlee is now impressive and is now both more professional and effective than in the past. As we pointed out earlier (ch. IV) the Corporation's industrial development policies have recently achieved notable successes and the Department has come to occupy an increasingly central role in the Corporation. After the transfer of housing to the District Council in 1978, the Department will become the most active and important within the re-styled Corporation.

By contrast, the Housing Department is declining in significance. During 1977 staffing levels were reduced by natural wastage, voluntary retirement and re-deployment and the Department is gradually being dismantled in preparation for the housing handover. Unlike the Industrial Department, the Housing Department has continued to be the focus of adverse criticism rather than praise. It very directly bears the brunt of Peterlee's problems; it is the main point of contact - and conflict - between the Corporation and residents and it is not noted for its sensitivity or efficiency. The Department

appears to do little to help tenants in difficulty and its record for housing maintenance is poor. More generally, the relationship between the Corporation and its tenants (considered further in section 3.4 below) leaves much to be desired. It is unfortunate that reforms and innovations in this Department, which began to be suggested in 1974-5, were not carried out once it became clear that housing was to be transferred.

At this late stage in Peterlee's development, when there remains little left to plan or build, the Technical Services Departments (planners, architects, engineers, surveyors) have also declined in importance and staffing is below establishment levels. Since Peterlee, unlike Aycliffe, does not have a Direct Labour Department, much of the building work has been undertaken by contractors. Consequently, the role of the Technical Services staff has been relatively limited to directing and monitoring the work of contractors.

The Finance Department handles all the Corporation's accounts (analysed in section 2.3 below) and also manages the Central Cash Collection Office, the town centre office at which tenants pay their rents, visiting rent-collectors having been withdrawn in 1970. This has meant that the routine contact between the Housing Department and tenants has been removed and, with it, the ability to raise problems and questions when paying the rent. A separate office deals with maintenance requests whilst other matters are dealt with elsewhere within the Housing Department, thus adding further confusion to an already complex bureaucratic network.

The Corporation's Social Development Department performed a relatively minor role until 1974, when it was re-organised and expanded and moved from Shotton Hall to a shop unit in the town centre. The Department now has five officers, whose main task is to maintain links with a variety of organisations within the town, and to help in

the development of further groups. The Department has a declared commitment to the use of "non-directive" techniques, assisting groups to form rather than imposing them on the community.

The expansion of the Social Development Department can be considered as part of an attempt, led by Stevenson and made practicable after the retirement of Williams, to improve communication between the Corporation and residents and to assist or "develop" the social structure of Peterlee. Another part of this attempt was the establishment, in 1975, of an "Arts and Information Office" in the town centre, an office managed jointly by the Corporation and Peterlee Town Council. The office provides a much-needed source of information on social and recreational activities and although limited in conception, it is possibly the most valuable innovation the Corporation has made in recent years. But notwithstanding these efforts the seriousness of the Corporation's avowed intent to assist and, moreover, involve residents in the life of the town must be questioned. In this connection the example of Peterlee Scene, a free four-page monthly newspaper launched in 1975 by the Social Development Department can be cited. In keeping with the Corporation's and the Department's concern to foster involvement, Scene was handed over to "people from the community", who are now responsible for its production. But it is still published by the Corporation and remains dependent upon its patronage; its style, viewpoint and content strongly suggest a continuing Corporation influence. The Corporation does not seem to have had the courage to give the paper full independence and Scene remains a Corporation production under the guise of a community newspaper.

The Corporation's Policy Research Unit (later re-named Central Policy Unit) was set up in 1973 to undertake the long-overdue task

of reviewing policies as well as centralising information and conducting research. It is understood that the new Chairman, himself experienced in social research, was very largely responsible for the Unit's establishment and regarded it as part of his attempt to modernise and restructure the Corporation.

The Unit has undoubtedly experienced more difficulties in the recent past than any other Department and became a source of considerable embarrassment to the Corporation. During 1974 the Unit prepared a lengthy and broadly-based policy review which openly identified Peterlee's failures and deficiencies. The Corporation itself was severely criticised for mismanagement, inefficiency and, above all, its insensitivity to local needs and concerns. The report was confidential to the extent that its circulation was apparently restricted to a few senior officers; it was then shelved and all but ignored.

Subsequently, two of the Unit's four members prepared a report⁽¹⁾ which urged the dissolution of the Corporation. They argued that the Corporation's influence was inherently destructive and "denying" and maintained that it was unrealistic to hope for thorough-going reforms. At the same time they tendered their resignations and publicly repeated their opinions. The Corporation responded defensively to this outburst of "bad publicity", claiming that its critics were "anarchists" and "idealists". Commenting on a later pamphlet⁽²⁾ outlining their views, Stevenson remarked that theirs was "a nihilistic attack, against all institutions".⁽³⁾ Certainly the opinions put forward by these two former members of the Corporation staff (to which further reference is made later in this chapter) unbalanced the

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- (1) The Future of the Development Corporation in Peterlee by R. Morgan and D. Robinson, P.D.C. Policy Research Unit, April 1975.
 (2) Institutions for Man, by R. Morgan and D. Robinson, 1976.
 (3) Quoted from "Pamphlet Starts Peterlee Battle", Observer, 4.4.76.

Corporation and provoked an over-reaction which might be taken to indicate that they hit on at least some home truths. The Unit itself never recovered and became increasingly peripheral within the Corporation; it was re-named but new appointments were not made and currently only one officer remains. In 1977 the Corporation appointed a "Data Specialist" to meet its information needs and now avoids undertaking research which might prove contentious.

Under the Chairmanship of Stevenson, the number of staff employed by the Corporation has grown considerably and much of this expansion took place after Williams left in 1974. In 1977 the Corporation had 217 full-time administrative, professional, technical and clerical employees, as compared with 135 in 1974 and only 73 in 1957. A further seven administrative staff - the General Manager, Directors of Departments and the Principal Social Development Officer - serve both Peterlee and Aycliffe, working part-time at both Corporation offices. As the housing stock has grown, it has also been necessary to employ additional manual staff, engaged largely on maintenance work. In 1977 there were 257 full-time and 40 part-time manual workers, compared with 187 full-time and 16 part-time workers in 1974. In 1957 the Corporation employed only 80 full-time manual staff and 8 part-timers.⁽¹⁾

Accompanying the growth and re-structuring of the Corporation administration has been the gradual removal of staff from Shotton Hall to offices in the town centre, a process which has now been completed. Initially all non-manual staff were accommodated at Shotton Hall. During the 1960s the Housing Department took offices

(1) Staff figures from the Corporation's Annual Reports (H.M.S.O.).



Plate 31 Shotton Hall, headquarters of Peterlee Development Corporation until 1977.(Photo.1978).



Plate 32 Lee House, the Corporation's new town centre headquarters.

in the town centre, followed by the Social Development Department in 1974. In 1977 the rest of the administration moved out of Shotton Hall and into Lee House, a recently completed town centre office block. After the housing transfer, almost all of the Corporation's administrative staff will be based at Lee House.

It is tempting to regard the contrast between Shotton Hall and Lee House (see Plates 31 and 32) as indicative of the changes in style and image which the Corporation has sought to put into effect during the last few years. Shotton Hall is a rambling country house, which accommodated a Corporation which existed in splendid isolation. It was physically remote from Peterlee's residents and was consistent with an aloof, secretive image. There is little to suggest that the Corporation in its new offices is significantly more sensitive or more accessible to Peterlee people; indeed, after the transfer of housing, its involvement with the public will markedly diminish. But there is a major difference in style and image. Lee House is ultra-modern and air-conditioned, accommodating a Corporation which seeks to impress and attract industrialists. The Corporation was never willing and able to allow popular involvement in its affairs and it remains a remote bureaucracy; but it has developed a professional, business-like image which no doubt will help secure its success as an industrial development agency.

2.3 Assets, income and expenditure.

An examination of the Corporation's accounts (presented in the Annual Reports published by H.M.S.O.) provides an indication of the scale of resources employed in Peterlee's development and the relative significance of the Corporation's various activities.

By the end of March 1977 the Corporation had expended almost £36m. on capital schemes.⁽¹⁾ This figure, however, represents historic costs and is thus not a true measure of assets; if re-valued to take account of inflation and current market value (a notional concept) the Corporation's assets would perhaps be "worth" two or three times this figure.

The largest single item of capital expenditure is housing, amounting to £18.7m out of the cumulative total of £36m. Expenditure on industrial buildings was £6.5m., followed by commercial buildings (£1.4m.) and other property (£1.4m.). Infrastructure was a major item, with £4.6m. spent on site development works, £0.4m. on main roads and £0.3m. on a sewerage scheme. The cost of the actual site, including the few buildings existing at designation, pales into insignificance at historic prices, amounting to £0.8m. (net of disposals). The Corporation is able to purchase land at existing use value and much of the site was acquired in the period 1948-52; some acquisitions were however made during the 1960s when the designated area was extended to provide industrial sites west of the A19 road. The Capital Account also includes contributions to Local Authorities and statutory undertakers of £0.3m. towards capital schemes, in addition to contributions from the Major Amenity Fund for social and recreational facilities amounting to little more than £0.1m. The relative unimportance of this latter expenditure (which, it should be remembered, is a total cumulative figure) may be gauged from the fact that the Corporation's capital spending on such items as furniture, vehicles and equipment amounted to nearly twice the sum spent from the Major Amenity Fund.

Comparing the 1977 Capital Account with those of 1967 and 1957,

(1) Net of disposals e.g. of land to Local Authorities and rented houses to tenants.
Gross capital expenditure totalled £40m. by 1977.

it is evident that housing, while remaining the major component of expenditure, has declined in significance. 69% of capital spending up to 1957 was accounted for by housing, compared with 64% up to 1967 and 52% up to 1977. This is largely because factory building has constituted an increasing share of expenditure, especially during the last ten years. Up until 1957 expenditure on factory building was almost wholly incurred by the Board of Trade, through N.E.T.E. With the growth of the Corporation's industrial development programme, the Corporation spent £1.1m. on factories by 1967, representing 7% of capital expenditure up to that time. By 1977, £6.5m. had been spent on factory building, some 18% of the cumulative total. In 1976-7 alone, the Corporation spent £0.9m. on factory development, as compared with £0.15m. during the financial year 1966-7.

The current accounts, relating to operating expenditure, (Table 6.1) show the heavy burden of debt servicing and administrative costs. Peterlee is one of the only early New Towns which continues to operate at a loss; in 1976-7 the Corporation reported a deficit of £2.2m., compared with £1.6m. deficit in the previous year. Such losses are offset by further borrowing from the Treasury, bringing further pressure to bear on costs.

Housing represents the main component in both income and expenditure on the current account. Like the Local Authorities, the Corporation receives a substantial part of its housing income in the form of subsidies from the Department of the Environment (D.O.E.). In order to balance the housing accounts, as required by the D.O.E., an additional subsidy is provided under Section 42(2) of the New Towns Act.

Income from property other than housing amounts to £0.4m. It is of interest to note here that the industrial rent income excludes

Table 6.1 Peterlee Development Corporation: Operating Income and Expenditure for
year ended 31.3.77 (Based on re-worked published Annual Accounts)

<u>INCOME</u>			<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
a) <u>Housing</u>	£	£	a) <u>Housing</u>		£
Rents	1,744,163		Administration		378,855
<u>Less</u> rebates of			Repairs and Maintenance		695,385
£237,776		1,461,669	Maint. of pvte. roads & open spaces		88,647
Other related income			Caretaking, cleaning, lighting, insurance		15,040
(inc. loan charges on			Bad debts		3,235
house sales, rate			Misc. expenses		76,614
compounding allowance etc.)		271,015	Interest & debt redemption		1,838,384
Subsidies from D.O.E.		1,230,819			
SUB TOTAL		2,963,503	SUB TOTAL		3,096,160
b) <u>Other Property</u>			b) <u>Other Property</u>		
Ground & Property rents from			Administration		242,484
Industrial		197,736	Repairs & maintenance		91,516
Commercial		197,789	Bad debts		346
Other properties		10,583	Other expenses		3,117
			Interest & debt redemption		1,228,708
SUB TOTAL		406,108	SUB TOTAL		1,566,171
c) <u>Other Income</u>			c) <u>Other Expenditure</u>		
From D.O.E. (section 42(2)			Interest & debt redemption on General		
contribution)		150,430	Revenue Account		791,350
From Local Authorities for			Administration (other current)		254,978
Castle Eden Denes		8,000	Castle Eden Denes (maintenance etc.)		39,416
Other (interest on various loans)		103,497	Maint. of other pvte. roads & open spaces		106,893
			Other		18,451
SUB TOTAL		261,927	SUB TOTAL		1,211,088
FULL TOTAL		3,631,538	FULL TOTAL		5,873,419

DEFICIT: £2,241,881

rents waived in respect of rent-free periods granted to lessees of Corporation factories. In 1976-7 this amounted to £143,925 of "lost" income; the cumulative total of rents waived by March 1977 was £579,935.⁽¹⁾

On the expenditure side, interest and debt redemption represents nearly 66% of outgoings and administration a further 15%. In fact, only part of the administrative costs are charged to the current accounts. Of the full total of £1,394,753 spent on administration by the Corporation in 1976-7, £493,507 was deemed capital expenditure and charged to the capital accounts, since it is considered an integral part of expenditure on capital projects.

A closer look at the published accounts reveals the scale of the Corporation's financial commitment in its efforts to attract new industry. The discrepancy between income and expenditure on property other than housing approached £1.2m. in 1976-7, of which nearly £0.9m. represented the deficiency on industrial property. A large part of this deficiency can be accounted for by rents waived. The industrial development programme directly subsidises private industry and produces the main component of Peterlee's operating deficit. A further significant feature of the accounts is that the Corporation recorded an expenditure of £48,946 on "publicity" during the year, most of which will have been spent on industrial promotion. This figure compares with publicity costs in 1972-3 of only £4,963 and a mere £503 in 1956-7. Since 1972-3, the resources (at historic costs) devoted to publicity have increased almost ten-fold, while total administrative expenses have rather more than doubled.

(1) P.D.C. Annual Report, 1977; Accounts - Note 12.

A substantial part - estimated at one-third - of total expenditure on the development of New Towns is met by agencies other than the Corporations.⁽¹⁾ State agencies, both local and national and, to an extent, the private sector contribute to the cost of development. Since these agencies do not separate from their accounts expenditure in New Towns the scale of this commitment must be left as an estimate, but it is not unreasonable to suggest that between £10m. and £20m. has come from these sources and been expended on Peterlee since designation. This is an indication not only of the dependence of the Corporation on these other agencies but also underlines - as we now seek to show - the financial stakes which may be involved in any (essentially political) struggle between the Corporation and external agents.

(1) Estimate from Expenditure Committee, 13th Report, 1975, v.I, para. 12.

3. Peterlee Development Corporation - external relationships

3.1 Introduction

The remainder of this chapter attempts to further examine the functions and style of the Corporation by reference to its external relations. Although the Corporation is in contact with a wide variety of institutions, it is considered that the most important (and most formal) links are with Central Government and the Local Authorities. These principal relationships are discussed in sections 3.2 and 3.3. We then examine, in section 3.4., the more diffuse - but nonetheless vital - relationship between the Corporation and the people of Peterlee.

3.2 The Corporation and Central Government

Under the provisions of the New Towns Act, Corporations are directly responsible to the Minister (Secretary of State for the Environment). The Minister's control is put into effect through his civil servants in the New Towns Directorate within the D.O.E., which comprises a staff of about 80, based in Whitehall. The Minister's functions include deciding upon New Town designations, appointing Corporation Board Members and approving (or otherwise) Corporation expenditure plans. The Minister may also advise Corporations on matters of general policy, such as the sale of Corporation houses. In practice many, if not most, "Ministerial decisions" are taken by civil servants following more or less established guidelines; the Minister's control is thus largely nominal but he is held responsible by Government and Parliament for these "Ministerial decisions".

Contrary to the views put forward by Schaffer (1972 pp. 207-13) it does not seem that the Minister exerts stringent control over the Corporations. It appears that in the early days of the programme,

Corporations were subject to very close scrutiny and, indeed, many objected in their first Annual Reports to having to seek approval for almost every item of expenditure. However, over the years control has been relaxed very considerably, such that now Corporations have only to receive approval from the Minister for a total annual budget. The degree of autonomy currently enjoyed by Corporations, stemming from a lack of central control, was in fact the main source of concern to the recent Parliamentary Expenditure Committee, set up to review the New Towns programme.⁽¹⁾ Evidence presented to the Committee pointed, time and again, to the failure of the D.O.E. to control the expenditure and direct the policies of Corporations. The New Towns Directorate had a very weakly-developed monitoring capability and seemed unable to formulate or institute policy initiatives. One witness argued that the Directorate was unable to exert a more significant influence over Corporations or properly monitor their activities because it was seriously overworked and understaffed.

Successive Ministers have themselves tended to avoid becoming involved in specific, detailed issues by refusing to intervene in matters concerning "the day-to-day administration" of New Towns. At Peterlee, complaints were made on several occasions to the Minister about Corporation rent increases but neither Conservative nor Labour Ministers have intervened; in the Thorntree Gill tenants' dispute in the early 1950s, for example, the views of tenants were virtually ignored by the Minister. As far as we are aware, the Minister has never actively responded to complaints by Peterlee people against

(1) Expenditure Committee, 13th Report, 1975, 5 vols. See especially Memoranda and Minutes of Evidence from D.O.E. witnesses.

the Corporation. It was, however, heartening to note that the Minister apparently asked the Corporation for "a detailed reply" to the criticisms put forward by its two former research officers in 1976,⁽¹⁾ although the outcome of this request is unknown.

Although the Minister appears to consider that he and his Directorate are concerned only with general questions of policy and practice, there do not in fact seem to have been many occasions when the Minister has issued policy directives to Corporations. To the extent that Corporations pursue "policies" as opposed merely to fitting in with established practices, these policies emerge out of discussion and compromise agreements between the Corporations and the Ministry. Although supposedly the Minister's agents, the Corporations themselves have a capacity to strongly oppose unwelcome interference through their secretariat, the New Towns Association and its allies in the New Towns "movement". The Corporations defend an independence which is considerably greater than that of Local Authorities or the public corporations of the Nationalized industries.

The relative autonomy accorded to New Town Corporations increases the significance of one of the Minister's most important tasks: the choice of Members to serve on the Corporation Boards. In the absence of strong Ministerial control, the Board shoulders a heavy responsibility. In many respects, the successful development of a New Town must, ultimately, depend upon the integrity and ability of Board Members. They are responsible for policy and for staff appointments and thus are able to shape the administrative style and corporate image.

(1) According to an article in the Observer, 4.4.76.

3.3 The Corporation and Local Authorities

Many commentators - including some of those most committed to New Towns - concede that the relationship between a Corporation and the "host" Local Authorities can be, and sometimes is, an unhappy one. Corporations have complained that the Local Authorities are slow to meet their responsibilities in the New Towns, are unco-operative and, at worst, obstructive. Local Authorities have, in turn, argued that they are not informed, much less consulted, about Corporation proposals yet at the same time are expected to take on what may well be a heavy burden of expenditure in the New Towns. More generally, the interests of both parties may diverge and each may be frustrated by limitations on its power as a result of the other's existence.

The viewpoints of both the Local Authorities and the Corporations were represented in evidence to the Expenditure Committee. The Association of New Town Local Authorities pointed out⁽¹⁾ that their members, "host" Authorities, complained above all of the failure of Corporations and the D.O.E. to fully inform and consult with them. It was noted that these Local Authorities, directly concerned with the New Towns, did not have access to Corporation Board minutes nor were they able to obtain D.O.E. circulars sent to the New Towns. Because circulars remained confidential some Local Authorities had long been unaware of the existence of the Major Amenity Fund, for example. Similarly, the Association noted, these Local Authorities had been refused access to the New Towns Handbook, a Ministry guide to Corporation procedures, which might well be of some explanatory value to "host" Authorities. It was argued, in addition, that New Towns can

(1) Expenditure Committee, 13th Report, 1975, v.II, pp. 166-90.
A.N.T.L.A. is now incorporated into the Association of District Councils.

involve Local Authorities in undertaking very substantial expenditure well in excess of the increase in rate income they receive.

But the Corporations, represented by the New Towns Association, value their independence and maintain that problems arise from an inadequate definition of responsibilities. Where responsibilities are shared conflicts may arise because relative shares are open to negotiation; with roads, for instance, the Corporations argue that they are "entirely vulnerable" "we have no standing at all - we have to take what we can get".⁽¹⁾ The consequent difficulties are especially acute in relation to the provision of social facilities; here the Corporations complain, with justification, that the Major Amenity Fund is hopelessly inadequate and leaves them to rely heavily on Local Authorities which are not always sympathetic or indeed able to help. Hence, the New Towns Association would wish to see the powers of Corporations considerably extended, or otherwise to have a clear and binding agreement on the level of contributions a Local Authority should make.⁽²⁾

These areas of conflict and tension discussed in general terms in the Expenditure Committee's reports can also be traced in the relationship between Peterlee Development Corporation and the three Local Authorities most concerned with the New Town: Durham County Council, Easington District Council (formerly Easington R.D.C.) and Peterlee Town Council (formerly Peterlee Parish Council). Of the three, the District Council has been most significantly involved with

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- (1) Ibid., p.231 (part of the submission by the New Towns Association).
 (2) However, Thomas (1972, p.51) has pointed out that owing to variations in circumstances between Local Authorities, it would not be possible to develop a cost-sharing formula which could equitably be imposed in all localities. The same writer notes that the Minister can intervene and impose a cost-sharing settlement for certain services (but not amenities) - but it is very unusual for him to do so.

Peterlee and its relationship with the Corporation was, until recently, the least satisfactory. The County Council's role may perhaps best be described as "distant" whilst the Town Council, although wholly and immediately concerned with Peterlee has had a very limited function, on account of its lowly status and small budget.

Reference has previously been made (ch. II) to the important part played by Easington R.D.C. in promoting the New Town scheme and to the subsequent deterioration in the relationship between the Council and the Corporation during the months following designation. The Council was particularly concerned that only one of its members had been appointed to the Corporation Board and felt strongly that its representation on the Board should be substantially increased. The Council objected to the Minister's appointments and urged the Minister to choose members of the Council, but without success.⁽¹⁾ Easington R.D.C. also claimed that the Corporation was secretive and failed to keep the Council informed of its activities; the Corporation had, for example, refused a request to make available its Board minutes to the Council. More generally, the R.D.C. felt that it was being ignored by the Corporation and being prevented from participating in the scheme which it had initiated.

Relations with the Corporation showed a slight improvement towards the end of 1949 when it was agreed to set up a consultative committee, comprising 8 R.D.C. Councillors, 4 Board Members and 3 officers of the Corporation. It appears, however, that the committee met infrequently and that this consultative machinery was abandoned after the publication of the Master Plan in 1952.⁽²⁾

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- (1) At one stage the R.D.C. submitted the names of all members of the Council to the Minister for his consideration to press home the claim for increased representation.
 - (2) A reference in the R.D.C. minutes, 3.5.56, noted that the committee had not met since October 1952.

The extent to which informal contacts were maintained between the Corporation and the Council during the 1950s is not known but, from the evidence of both Council and Corporation minutes, it certainly does not appear that the R.D.C. was anxious for close involvement with Peterlee. Peterlee's ratepayers did, of course, receive basic services from the Council but on matters such as the provision of social facilities in Peterlee the Council did not take the initiative; it waited to be asked by the Corporation. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the R.D.C., with no influence over the management and development of Peterlee, was hardly concerned to provide expensive additional facilities there. It seems likely too that Councillors regarded Peterlee as a threat to their villages - a point brought into focus at the Town Map inquiry in 1960 - and were anxious to avoid diverting limited financial resources, as well as population, to the New Town.

By the early 1960s, the provision of social facilities in Peterlee became an issue of increasing concern and it evidently became more necessary to foster co-operation between the Corporation and Local Authorities (especially Easington R.D.C.) in order to meet this need. It appears that it was primarily this issue which led Mr. Mellish, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Ministry, to press for the creation of formal liaison machinery. At his instigation, a Liaison Committee was set up in 1966, comprising representatives from the Corporation Board and senior staff, together with two or three Councillors and the clerks from the R.D.C. and the Parish Council and representatives of the County Council. This Committee, which continues to function, at last gave the Local Authorities an opportunity to be informed of the Corporation's activities and intentions. The Corporation provides progress reports on housing and industrial development but perhaps the main function of these meetings is to discuss the provision of those facilities and

services which are the responsibility of the Local Authorities. The establishment of the Committee helped considerably to normalise relations between the Corporation and the Local Authorities and provided an opportunity to formulate projects to which the Corporation could make a financial contribution from the Major Amenity Fund.

Although the R.D.C. increased its financial commitment to Peterlee during the late 1960s, the New Town was still regarded as a blank area on the Council's maps, ceded to the Government by unfavourable treaty and the Corporation remained a secretive administration. But during the last five years relations have markedly improved. In part this is due to changes of attitude and style within the Corporation following Stevenson's appointment, and to increased R.D.C. representation on the Board. The assumption of wider planning powers by the District Council, established after the 1974 local government reforms, has also helped and enabled the Council to regard Peterlee as much less of a threat to the villages than formerly. But, above all, the Government's decision to promote the transfer of housing to the District Council has made it possible for the Council to think of "taking over" Peterlee. By removing the rivalry between the two housing authorities an important source of friction is removed and the Council is able to re-assert its jurisdiction over the New Town area. With a large degree of control over Peterlee the Council is able to regard Peterlee as a part of the District, if not its functional centre.

Since 1956, the people of Peterlee have been directly represented on the R.D.C. and, since 1960, on the County Council. However, their most immediate and direct representation has been provided by the Parish Council, established in 1956 and re-named a Town Council in 1974. As the least powerful authority in local government, the Council's influence has been limited, although it has made small - but important - contributions to amenity provision.

For the first five years of its existence, the Council had never met with the Corporation Board but had only had dealings with Corporation staff. Following their complaints about this, an initial meeting with the Board was arranged in 1961, which led to the formation of a Joint Consultative Committee. This Committee, which includes Town (Parish) Councillors, together with the Chairman and a Board Member of the Corporation, remains in operation alongside the larger Liaison Committee. This Committee is mainly devoted to the discussion of housing matters, including repairs, maintenance and rent rebates and hence will probably be disbanded after the housing transfer.

The impotence of the Town Council coupled with, for many years, the disengaging tactics of the R.D.C. meant that the Corporation's autonomy could not begin to be challenged or effectively countered by the local government structure. During the 1960s attempts had been made by the Parish Council to obtain Urban District status for Peterlee which would have brought into being a more powerful Local Authority to directly represent Peterlee. This attempt failed, partly because Peterlee's population was then too small to justify an Urban District Council, but also because of opposition from the R.D.C., which feared losing what little control it had over Peterlee and also losing rate income. Disunity and rivalry within local government thus helped to prevent the emergence of an elected administration better placed to challenge the Corporation's autonomy.

Durham County Council's role in Peterlee has been limited, hardly extending beyond the carrying-out of its statutory duties. Peterlee was seen as a Government venture, useful in strengthening the Council's strategic planning policies, but very clearly a Government responsibility. Population "re-grouping" at Peterlee

was supported, whilst problems arising from Peterlee's development or its form of management were considered to be the concerns of the R.D.C., not the County Council.⁽¹⁾ The Corporation formulated its own policies and devised its own programmes which, to a large extent, made Peterlee independent from the County Council. The relationship appears to be one characterised by co-existence, without challenge and with little conflict.

It is probable that Peterlee would have gained much from a partnership arrangement, involving joint work at all levels between the Corporation and the Local Authorities. Since the project was first proposed and strongly supported by the R.D.C. such an arrangement would have been highly appropriate. Instead, it is now necessary to attempt to re-integrate Peterlee into the life of the sub-region and into its institutions of local government. The transfer of housing is an important step towards this and will provide the opportunity, for the first time since designation, for important decisions to be made for Peterlee by an elected body. It is the case, however, that prolonged one-party rule has made these institutions themselves complacent and unresponsive - but at least the idea of democratic government for Peterlee becomes a possible prospect.

3.4 The Corporation and the people of Peterlee.

In this section we attempt to characterise the relationship, both direct and indirect, between the Corporation and the people of Peterlee. We focus upon, and seek to exemplify, two main aspects of the relationship: the attitude which the Corporation adopts and the ineffective nature of the relationship.

(1) For evidence of this see the preamble to the Easington Town Map (draft written analysis, 1958) in which the County Council stressed that the R.D.C. had proposed Peterlee in the first place - and must thus face the consequences for the villages.

By far the most important (and often the only) direct contact people have with the Corporation is through the Housing Department. In the 1974 N.E.A.S. Survey a number of respondents referred to difficulties they had experienced in getting repairs done and the unhelpful, sometimes dictatorial, attitude of the Department's staff. There is no doubt, too, that there have been weaknesses in management, indicated by the establishment of stigmatised areas and the lack of help offered to tenants in difficulty. But perhaps the clearest evidence of the Department's (and the Corporation's) attitude to tenants is to be found in rules and regulations governing tenancy.

The tenancy rules published in the 1971 Tenants Handbook⁽¹⁾ which, as far as we are aware, are still in force are not only severely restrictive but also tend to belittle the judgement and intelligence of tenants. According to the rules Corporation tenants are, for example, obliged to seek permission if they wish to keep a pet, take in a lodger or erect an external T.V. aerial.⁽²⁾ Private gardens must be cultivated, chimneys swept at least once a year and tenants must not "cause or create any discomfort or annoyance to other residents or to the Corporation". External decoration is undertaken by the Corporation - often belatedly - and tenants have no say in the colour scheme chosen. It is stated that internal house-painting may be undertaken - with the Corporation's permission - but tenants are asked to "avoid using dark shades or exotic colour schemes". "The Corporation does not object to tenants papering their rooms.... provided that permission is asked for first." The Housing Department

(1) Peterlee Tenants Handbook: A Compendium of Useful Information for Tenants, P.D.C., 1971, pp. 11-13.

(2) Almost all houses in Peterlee are served by Rediffusion cable T.V. This service, justified on aesthetic grounds, seems to suffer defects which have brought repeated criticism in the Press. Tenants are obliged to pay rental for the service - whether they use it or not.

almost goes so far as to say that coal must not be kept in the bath; indeed one of the rules states that the bath must be kept clean and it even declares that "the W.C. pan is to be used for what it is intended and not for any other purpose".

It is true that some of the more petty regulations are not in fact enforced - clearly rules governing interior decoration could only be enforced by an army of inspectors and administrators. During the 1950s "illegal" dog owners were reported by rent-collectors and in the 1960s warning letters were sent to tenants who failed to cultivate their gardens; nowadays such action is both rare and would prove impracticable. Nonetheless, these rules still stand as a statement of Corporation policy and attitude and many of them are still taken seriously by the Corporation, if not by tenants. During 1975, for instance, "routine inspections" of houses by Corporation staff revealed that scores of tenants on the newer estates had removed a storage cupboard in their kitchens, without authorisation, for reasons of space and efficiency.⁽¹⁾ The Corporation reacted liberally with "an amnesty" for the tenants concerned and informed others that permission would be granted for the same alteration "provided a letter seeking approval is sent to the Housing Department". It is an indication of the more relaxed attitude of the Corporation that an amnesty was granted but it was made clear that a rule had been broken and further stressed that "there will be no automatic granting of permission for a garden shed to replace the storage cupboard lost by the alteration".

In the 1974 Survey, 41% of tenants said that there were Housing Department regulations which they did not like and many mentioned

(1) Reported in Peterlee Scene, August 1976.

some of the petty restrictions we have outlined. Others chose to ignore the rules, disclaiming knowledge of them - although they are printed on the rent books. However, the general point remains that the Corporation's rules are severely restrictive and betray an attitude which tends to see the tenant as an unfortunate and potentially irresponsible necessity in the housing system.

The attitude of the Corporation is further demonstrated, and also re-inforced, by its failure to initiate a meaningful dialogue with the public. Within the Corporation we have encountered an ignorance of, and sometimes disinterest in, the nature and needs of the community for which it is responsible. And within the community there is a widespread ignorance of the composition, functions and policies of the Corporation. Although the Corporation has recently attempted to forge some links with residents, notably through the Social Development Department, it is still the case that, as one Community Development Officer said, the channels of communication between the Corporation and residents are "so defective.... that most information about the Corporation's activities are wild rumour".⁽¹⁾

There are two main sources of information from the Corporation: public statements, issued to the Press usually by the Public Relations Officer and the Corporation's Annual Report, published by H.M.S.O. Both are generally unhelpful. Public statements are often bland announcements of decisions taken, without explanation. They are also widely regarded as unreliable because the Corporation has frequently been proved wrong after announcing the impending development of bowling alleys and cinemas, or the advent of "jobs in

(1) Report by J. Vincent on Edenhill, 20.8.74. Mr. Vincent was engaged by the Corporation as a temporary Community Development Officer for six months during 1974. His brief was to undertake a pilot study of Edenhill, intended to provide a basis for action by the Social Development Department.

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the pipeline for Peterlee". The Corporation also tends to issue crudely defensive statements in response to any criticism which do not answer points raised. The Annual Report is justifiably described by Morgan and Robinson as "puerile"; it offers "no basis for confronting the Corporation by the Minister or anyone else".⁽¹⁾ It is not easily accessible and is probably read by very few people outside the Corporation.

The weaknesses of local communications media intensify the problem of inadequate information. The daily newspapers circulating in Peterlee and operating at a sub-regional level are based at Sunderland and Hartlepool,⁽²⁾ are both part of the same newspaper group and give no more than cursory treatment to Peterlee news. A weekly newspaper, the Peterlee Chronicle, has been published since 1969 but the bulk of the paper is, in fact, the Durham Advertiser, containing Durham news. Peterlee is peripheral to the transmission areas of the two local commercial radio stations (based at Newcastle and Stockton) and consequently is hardly mentioned by either station. Peterlee Scene, the four-page monthly news-sheet published under the auspices of the Corporation, is the only newspaper based in, and wholly concerned with, Peterlee - but its coverage is poor and its conception dubious. The media rarely direct criticism at the Corporation or involve themselves in investigative journalism. It is also unusual for the people of Peterlee to use the media to voice their concern and articulate their interests. Occasional efforts, by such groups as the Sunny Blunts tenants, to use the media have had some success (see ch. III, section 5), but many other groups and individuals are reluctant to do the same, sometimes out of a fear of reprisals from "authority".

(1) Institutions for Man, R. Morgan and D. Robinson, 1976, p.9.

(2) The Sunderland Echo and Hartlepool Mail.

The situation which has been created, as it affects and is perceived by residents at Edenhill, an area with more than its fair share of problems requiring the Corporation's attention, is well described in an internal report by J. Vincent produced in 1974. Raising the question of the strategies Edenhill residents adopt to meet their "felt needs", Vincent stated that:

"The strongly held consensus that someone ought to do something about repairs or whatever, is not usually matched by the expectation that the authorities will act. The two most common strategies are:

- a) to try and move out of the troublesome environment, or
- b) to attempt to manipulate the different agencies by personal contact with their officers.

Collective action is not considered as a feasible alternative. Writing a letter to the press or starting a petition is regarded as the ultimate protest, only attempted by the desperate who are as much at their wits' end that they are prepared to leave themselves vulnerable to the power of the authority.

The belief that it is only possible to get an agency such as the Corporation to act on your behalf if you know the right people is a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a situation of seriously short resources and limited information it is difficult for the allocation of repairs, houses and other benefits to be seen to be fair. Thus everyone attempts to manipulate through personal contacts and success is attributed to good contacts and failure as the result of not having sufficient contacts to manipulate successfully. Thus, the original perception is always vindicated. The belief that agencies are only moved to act on one's behalf by personal contacts is a development of the perception that it is only rarely that the Corporation acts at all on community or individual needs. Hence the other strategy, which is to try and get out rather than hope for things to be changed. Housing transfers consequently became an issue. Further, in order to move, tenants attempt to use personal contacts in the belief that they will get nowhere if they do not." (1)

Vincent noted the further frustration caused by a confusion of responsibilities between different agencies. Although the Corporation may appear to be responsible for almost everything in Peterlee this is not, in fact, the case. Taking the example of vandalism, he

(1) Report by J. Vincent on Edenhill, 20.8.74, p.5.

points out that measures to deal with it would involve Durham County Council (police, education, social services), Peterlee Town Council (recreation), the District Council (cleansing) as well as the Corporation (housing, social development). This fragmentation not only makes it difficult for coherent policies to be formulated and carried out but also presents obstacles to those trying to get these agencies to act on a problem. It is difficult for an individual to know where to direct a complaint and it is not uncommon for one agency to attempt to shift responsibility/blame on to another.

The extent to which people feel unable to challenge the Corporation was revealed in the 1974 NEAS Survey in which 78% of Peterlee respondents agreed that "there is no way in which ordinary people can influence the decisions of the Development Corporation". (A similarly high degree of consensus on this was found amongst Rycliffe and Washington respondents). It was perhaps especially disconcerting to find that people also had little faith in the institutions of local government. 59% of respondents in Peterlee felt that there was "little difference between a Development Corporation and an ordinary Council" while a large minority, 20%, felt unable to give an opinion - evidence, perhaps, of a widespread ignorance of these institutions. Given the long period during which Peterlee people have been unable to participate in any meaningful way in the development and management of the town it is not surprising that many have become wholly apathetic. Collective social action is almost non-existent; only 12% of respondents were aware of an instance when local people had got together to tackle a problem facing their neighbourhood. Although collective action appears to have become a little less unusual since the Survey was conducted in 1974, it still seems to be the case that the manipulation of "contacts" - the handful

of Councillors, voluntary and professional social workers who have some access to the Corporation - remains the only strategy regarded by many people as having a chance of success.

During the last two or three years the Corporation has made some efforts to gather some information about the people it has housed and planned for and has attempted to make contact with the community, with limited success. In 1977 the Corporation did, for example, embark on its first social survey since the village survey carried out in 1948. Recently the Corporation made efforts to involve residents on one estate in choosing the location of a children's play area. But in our opinion it is not unduly harsh to dismiss such attempts as tokenism, coming at a very late stage when almost everything has been decided, the town is virtually complete (at least in physical terms) and the housing transfer is imminent (scheduled for March 1978). It can be argued, in other words, that at this stage the Corporation has little to fear from these limited attempts to become involved with the community; it has little to lose.

In 1975, however, before a firm decision had been taken to transfer housing to the District Council, the prospects of a withdrawal of some powers from the Corporation were not altogether clear and there was no question of the Corporation being altogether disbanded in the foreseeable future. It was in these circumstances that Morgan and Robinson boldly put forward their trenchant critique of the Corporation, a critique developed from first-hand experience of working within the Corporation's Policy Research Unit. They wrote:

"We began by thinking that the most important concern for the future was that local people should have more opportunity to develop their own lives and shape their own town in the way they would wish and to thereby realise more of themselves in their lives.

We thought it possible to conceive of the Corporation helping to bring about this more human future. It would need to give up its control over the town to local people, including control of itself. It could then become an organisation at the service of people's capabilities, sponsoring their enterprises, helping to set up independent centres of

knowledge, advice and resources, developing new means through which people can come together to share their experiences and learn from one another, opening up new views and new possibilities for their lives.

But in our judgement it is impossible for the Corporation to take on such new roles and responsibilities. The Corporation has not the inclination to serve the area in this way and it does not have the necessary trust and confidence of local people. It does not have the inclination for, even now, after 30 years in the area, the Corporation is preoccupied with how to prolong its own existence, rather than how to serve the community. It does not have the necessary trust and confidence of local people because they have experienced its long-standing indifference and because they lack any meaningful control over it."

After urging the dissolution of a Corporation which, they argued, could not be reformed, Morgan and Robinson resigned, declaring that

"The Corporation is so narrowly preoccupied with houses, industry and landscaping that it is positively destructive of the quality of people's lives, of their simple wishes and desires and thus their humanity. As tenants they are offered bad housing, little control and no dignity. As worker, merely a statistic in the case for more industrial land. As mother and child, offered aesthetic landscaping frustrating of the most simple desires. As citizens, offered public relations information. As people with special needs, silence." (1)

The critique presented by Morgan and Robinson, which still has a great deal of relevance, focusses on the relationship between the Corporation and Peterlee's residents and here strongly attacks the Corporation's style of operation. But at a more fundamental level, it is the structure and functions of the Corporation which deny popular participation, open government and sensitivity. From the first, New Town Corporations were set up as powerful, largely autonomous organisations able to get the job done with the single-mindedness which characterises a military operation. There was no place for the time-consuming procedures of democracy; the Master Plan was to be bulldozed through, if necessary despite local opposition, in

(1) Press release by R. Morgan and D. Robinson, 13.6.75.

pursuit of the "national interest". Regional notables on the Boards and "experts" on the staff of Corporations were sooner to be trusted with large sums of public money than were Local Authorities.

The "national interest" was economic reconstruction, implying (inter-alia) the assembly of labour forces and subsidies to industry. Seen in this light, participation did not have a part to play in development. And in the case of Peterlee, the Local Authorities were unable to offer a countervailing force to that of the Corporation. Above all, the concern of the State as a whole has been rooted firmly in the economic sphere. The social conception of the New Towns involving, in Reith's view, a mutually satisfying relationship between the Corporation and residents, was little more than an ideological smoke-screen. Given its basic functions, it is hardly surprising that Peterlee Development Corporation possesses values which, in the words of its critics, are "elitist, conservative and attuned to the business and professional worlds, and are entirely contrary to community control and self-realization."⁽¹⁾ As Morgan and Robinson declared

"There is very little affinity between the Corporation and the people of the area. A history of indifference, of the Corporation imposing and expropriating, of it devaluing the significance of local people and their communities; such a history cannot be forgotten in response to declarations of intent from the Corporation...." (2)

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- (1) The Future of the Development Corporation in Peterlee, P.D.C. Policy Research Unit, April 1975, para. 52.
 (2) Ibid., para. 58.

4. Concluding Comment

When the New Towns programme was inaugurated in 1946, it was believed necessary to create powerful agencies - the Development Corporations - to build and manage the New Towns. In many cases, there was a need to over-ride local opposition and there was also a concern to expedite development.

In this study we have shown that, at least in the case of Peterlee, the disadvantages of a Development Corporation far outweigh any advantages which may stem from its autonomy. Because Peterlee Development Corporation was independent of local democratic pressures and was relatively free of Central Government control, it was able to develop a style of administration which was narrow and isolationist. Consequently, the Corporation's relationships with external agencies were unsatisfactory, making it difficult to secure the support and co-operation upon which successful New town development depends. The people of Peterlee were given little opportunity to contribute to the planning and development of the town and the Corporation did not seek to take into account local concerns. Moreover, the experience of Peterlee's development, fraught with unresolved problems and some errors of judgement, provides little justification for confidence in the form of administration which a Development Corporation has provided.

In the future, after the transfer of housing to the District Council, the Corporation will continue to play a major role in the area through its attempts to attract industrial development. Yet, despite its stated concern to become more responsive to the local community, it appears that the Corporation will continue to safeguard its autonomy. There are no proposals, for example, to involve the people of Peterlee - who have the greatest concern with its economic future - in formulating an industrial development strategy. The Corporation seems, in fact, to be inherently incapable of responding to the challenge of democratic participation.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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1. Summary

An underlying theme in this study, given particular emphasis in Chapters I and II, has been the process and objectives of State intervention. The New Towns policy as a whole stemmed largely from the concern of Central Government to implement a reconstruction programme after the Second World War, whilst the Peterlee proposal originated as an attempt by the "local State", Easington R.D.C., to effect improvements in working-class living conditions. Local and national policies converged - although there was some divergence in objectives - and the Peterlee proposal was included within the New Towns programme.

The main aim of the R.D.C. was to improve and expand housing opportunities, which represented a continuation of their existing role; during the inter-war years the Council had become increasingly involved in housing provision, bearing the cost and the responsibility which the colliery companies would not bear. But the New Town scheme was also a response to the experience of Depression and was seen as a means to restructure, diversify and thus strengthen the local economy. In addition, the development of Peterlee might help to reform the "social character" of the area, so heavily criticised by Clarke in "Farewell Squalor".

The economic and social upheaval of war, coupled with the vital necessity for reconstruction, provided the preconditions for extending the scope of State intervention. Industries weakened by decades of underinvestment and disinvestment, yet of crucial importance in the economy, were Nationalized. The Welfare State was created and full employment promised. Economic reconstruction entailed the

development of industry to meet peacetime requirements, the replacement of industrial capacity damaged and destroyed and, in accordance with Labour's commitments, the use of regional policy measures. It was important also to launch major housing programmes. Above all, the central concern of the State as a whole was to revive and re-develop the economy by the instigation of policies designed to increase the efficiency and profitability of private industry, policies which were represented as serving the "national interest".

Although the New Towns Act did not constitute a major part of the reconstruction programme, it did offer a package of policies which added up to an exceptionally complete approach to long-term reconstruction. The development of New Towns seemed to provide a solution to several problems. Not only would convenient and potentially profitable greenfield locations, with few constraints, be provided for industry but also a contribution could be made towards meeting housing needs - and thus assembling the requisite labour force. The State ownership of New Town sites promised a cheaper approach than inner-city redevelopment and ensured a high degree of planning control. The New Towns policy also had a strong ideological component; it appeared idealistic and was represented, notably by the Reith Committee, as a policy which would promote major social change.

The inclusion of Peterlee within the New Towns programme was the outcome of several factors, together shaping policy. There is no doubt that the support of the R.D.C. and its efforts in producing a detailed formulation of the project was crucial; it is quite probable that without this east Durham would never have been considered as a location for a New Town. To the Ministry, the prospect of developing a New Town in an area where it had been proposed rather than opposed must have appeared attractive. But of greatest

importance was the concern of the State - especially the National Coal Board - to stabilise the mining labour force and hence secure output. "Coal at any price" was a vital requirement in the early post-war period; to meet the needs of private industry it had been Nationalized, industrial consumer prices subsidised and the miners promised improvements in an effort to retain them. Peterlee New Town was regarded by Easington R.D.C. as a project which would bring a variety of improvements to the area, while Central Government was primarily concerned to ensure adequate supplies of coal "in the national interest".

While Peterlee was conceived as being a "New Town for Miners", the miners themselves were given little opportunity to contribute towards its planning or development. Instead, under the procedures of the New Towns Act, a Development Corporation was created, comprising a Board of prominent personalities appointed by the Minister and a staff of technical experts. The establishment of the Corporation, a relatively autonomous and secretive administration, was soon to lead to conflict with other branches (both local and national) of the State. It also meant that the New Town project developed in isolation from the community and its elected representatives who had initially proposed it.

The Corporation formulated policies, pursuing its own distinctive rationality but encountered, at an early stage, the opposition of the N.C.B. which forced it to abandon Lubetkin's plans. The Corporation's industrial development policies also attracted substantial opposition, notably from the Board of Trade. In both cases the Corporation's policies were blocked when it attempted to ignore Peterlee's role vis à vis the coal industry.

During the 1950s the Corporation was constrained in its action by virtue of external pressures which emphasised a limited objective:

the establishment of a New Town for Miners. But in the sphere of housing development it did have some freedom and sought to escape from obscurity by engaging Victor Passmore as architectural consultant. The experiment resulted in the debacle of Milton Hindle's bankruptcy but nonetheless helped to establish Peterlee as something more than an ordinary housing estate. After that first experiment, the Corporation continued to seek innovations in housing design, with varying results.

By the end of the 1950s the State had abandoned its concern to maintain the previous high level of output in the coal industry and the N.C.B. developed policies of rationalisation, entailing manpower and capacity reductions. Peterlee, nearly half-built, had lost its prime objective. Throughout the following decade (and beyond) the Corporation had to find a new role for the town.

It proved difficult at this point to provide Peterlee with a new *raison d'être*. Clearly, it was vitally important to bring in new sources of employment. However, Peterlee had been designated with a view to serving the employment needs of nearby collieries and had few locational advantages to other industry - with the exception of firms requiring female labour. Little attempt had been made to improve communications or provide industrial sites and the Corporation had been prevented from attracting industry which might compete with the N.C.B. for labour.

Peterlee received little support from Central Government; the Hailsham Plan, for example, recognised an industrial role for the town and took steps to increase its attractiveness to industry - while at the same time allowing Washington to develop as a powerful rival.

Subsequently, Peterlee was left out of the Special Development Area schedule, thus undermining the Corporation's efforts to attract industry. In general terms, the N.C.B. and Central Government took almost no responsibility for the crisis which its own policies had precipitated. The Corporation was left to face contradictions inherent in State intervention; it could build houses but could not attract industry and, as in the past, the area was dependent upon decisions taken by the coal industry which ultimately reflected conditions in international fuel markets.

An attempt was made to re-interpret Peterlee's functions in the terms of the regional policy prescriptions of the 1960s. The development of the town was regarded as part of the process of modernisation and regional revival; Peterlee and the other New Towns were taken to exemplify the new image which the North-East must have in order to attract industry. Locally, Peterlee had of course been intended to represent the "modern" way of life in contrast to the "traditional" character of the pit villages. The concern with modernisation reached its climax during the Chairmanship of T. Dan Smith, who advocated proposals for a Science Centre and an Arts and Humanities Complex.

The 1970s have witnessed some successes in attracting industry to Peterlee and have also seen the completion of the housing programme. Peterlee has partially recovered from the traumas of the 1960s and the decision to transfer housing to the District Council has at last allowed the possibility of integrating Peterlee into its sub-region. Yet serious problems remain. Above all, there is a substantial shortage of employment with the result that there is a high level of unemployment, considerable commuting to other centres and continuing migration from the area. Peterlee is deficient in social facilities and services, especially bearing in mind its youthful population and

the town's supposed sub-regional role. And in the field of housing, the Corporation's experiments have not been an unmitigated success, nor have its management policies. On the other hand, some new industry has been brought to the area and living conditions have improved in some respects. But could these benefits have been secured without New Town development? Indeed, is it probable that alternative policies could have had greater beneficial effects, perhaps at a lower cost?

2. Conclusion

It is clear that a significant proportion of the "costs" of New Town development are borne by those who remain in the areas from which population, often accompanied by industry, has been exported. It is now commonly accepted that policies which have encouraged decentralisation from London have had deleterious social and economic consequences for the inner areas. Similarly, we argue that the development of Peterlee has had a detrimental effect on the surrounding villages. It is true that the provision of housing at Peterlee eased pressure on housing in the villages - but at the cost of denying the alternative solution of village redevelopment and growth. The villages were thus condemned to a long period of decline, losing a large number of young people and left to become almost moribund communities. Under the combined effect of New Town development and Durham County Council's settlement policy, resource allocation systems intensified inequalities between Peterlee and the pit villages.

Costs were also borne by those who moved to Peterlee. Living costs were greater in this modern environment and the housing system denied choice, necessitating increased consumption. Family and social networks were disrupted, producing unmeasurable social costs and the necessity for the use of secondary agencies. Peterlee residents do, however, receive the benefits of modern housing, a planned environment and newly-built schools, for example.

There is every reason to suppose, however, that these benefits could have been conferred on the villages by redevelopment and the addition of new housing. Had this occurred, the scandalous dereliction and decay of such places as Shotton could have been avoided and the villages would not now be facing the upheaval of clearance and

redevelopment following on from years of neglect. The social costs would almost certainly have been smaller while the development costs of extending existing settlements compare very favourably with the enormous expense of building a New Town entirely from scratch on a virgin site. The re-housed residents would also have had the benefit of existing services, rather than having to await the development of a New Town centre. Village redevelopment could also have been carried out by the Local Authority, rather than by a Development Corporation. Although the Local Authority is not a perfect model of democratic government, its members are at least elected and far more attuned to local affairs than the Corporation has proved to be. In addition the rent differential, in the past a serious and damaging problem, could have been avoided by "pooling" the old and new housing stocks.

One of the main arguments advanced by Clarke (and later, the Ministry) in favour of "centralised development" was that the New Town would bring urban services to the area. One large centre, it was maintained, could support facilities which the villages, even if expanded, would be too small to support. But in the event, Peterlee only very slowly gained some of the urban functions which were anticipated. Even now it supports only a modest range of services and does not provide an urban focus for the whole sub-region; many people rely heavily on Sunderland and Hartlepool for shopping and entertainment facilities - and also employment. Moreover, some services have moved out of the villages to Peterlee, thus compounding the decline of the villages. Worse still, some services once available in the villages have closed down completely and been lost to the area; had the villages been expanded they might have survived.

It is difficult also to find support for the argument that the establishment of a New Town was instrumental in stabilising the mining

labour force. While it is true that living conditions in the villages were poor - indeed, in some cases, abominable - men had left the area not so much to escape from an unattractive environment but rather to escape unemployment, hardship and harsh working conditions. Of course there were many good reasons, centred not least on principles of social justice, for improving living conditions in east Durham - but the redevelopment of the villages would equally have served this purpose.

Clarke also had in mind that industry might be more easily attracted to sites made available in conjunction with a New Town development; he felt that the pit villages would not be viewed favourably by industrialists. This consideration was largely irrelevant for many years while Peterlee was prevented from becoming a significant industrial centre and subsequently was found to have inherent disadvantages of site and location. More recently, having overcome some of these disadvantages and secured a limited amount of new industry, Peterlee has been increasingly justified in these terms. Certainly the availability of serviced sites, labour, key-worker housing, a variety of subsidies, and assistance from the Corporation has considerably helped to make Peterlee a not unattractive location for industry. The Corporation has also been able to devote far greater resources to the industrial development than the Local Authority would have been able to do. While it is probable that an industrial estate, operated perhaps by N.E.T.E., serving an area of expanded villages would have gained some firms, it may well be that it would not have achieved even the limited success of Peterlee. This is a debatable point and, to that extent, it is not possible to accept or reject this argument as justification for Peterlee's development.

In our view - and with the benefit of hindsight - the redevelopment of the existing villages would have been a better course of action than the designation of a New Town. In other words, the more mundane approach to the area's problems should have been adopted instead of the more drastic - but exciting - approach. Unfortunately, it appears to be one of the central dilemmas of planning that the apparently total solution is irresistably attractive - and is subsequently found to be not only partial but also tends to generate new problems which it cannot solve.

POSTSCRIPT

Shortly after the completion of this study it was announced that Alexandre Ltd. intended to close down their clothing factory in Peterlee. A trade recession was said to have caused this decision, which would entail the loss of 455 jobs. The majority of the workers employed at the factory are women. The local organiser of the Garment Workers' Union commented:

"It is pure sacrilege. The men at the top have amassed millions through the complete co-operation of this workforce and this is how they regard them. These people don't have a cat in hell's chance of getting other jobs and we will do everything we can to get this inexplicable decision reversed." (The Journal, 8.2.78).

Alexandre's was one of the first firms to move to Peterlee and its closure, if it is not averted, will represent a major setback to the industrial development programme. It will mean the disappearance of more than 10% of female jobs in manufacturing industry in Peterlee and undoubtedly will produce a substantial increase in local unemployment. But, more than that, it is a demonstration of the fragility of the industrial development which has taken place in Peterlee and in other "assisted" areas since the war and also emphasises the weaknesses of Peterlee's economy, dominated by textile and clothing manufacturers.

APPENDIX

Biographical details of the Board Members of Peterlee Development Corporation

(Joint Board with Aycliffe from 1963)

Mr. Monica Felton (1948-9). Chairman

Chairman of P.D.C. until her resignation in 1949; subsequently became Corporation Chairman at Stevenage (until 1951).

b.1906. Educated at University College, Southampton and L.S.E. Formerly member of Herts. County Council and Chairman of L.C.C. Supplies Committee during the war. Member of the Reith Committee and Vice-Chairman of Stevenage Development Corporation (1946-8). Writer and lecturer. Formerly a governor of the L.S.E. When appointed to the Chairmanship at Peterlee, Dr. Felton was the first woman to become Chairman of a Development Corporation. Dismissed from Stevenage Corporation in 1951 as a result of her comments on American atrocities in North Korea.

Mr. E. Allen (1948-9).

Reader in Economics at the University of Durham.

Mrs. J.W. Gray (1948-9).

Wife of the Clerk to Easington R.D.C. Member of the Women's Voluntary Service. The Press hinted that a disagreement within the Corporation had caused her to resign in 1949.

Lt. Col. Sir Myers Wayman (1948).

b. 1890. Educated at Cambridge. C.B.E., J.P. Resident of Sunderland. Member of Sunderland Borough Council 1936-45; Mayor of Sunderland 1938-43; Deputy Mayor 1943-45. Chairman of Sunderland Industrial Development Board, 1938-43. In 1948 was Vice-Chairman of the National Savings Movement Chairman of Myers Wayman Ltd. and other companies. Vice-Chairman of Sunderland Working Men's Building Society and

of Sunderland Properties Co. Ltd. Director of Sunderland U.P.C.
President, Sunderland Chamber of Commerce (1950).

Resigned from Peterlee Development Corporation in 1948
owing to ill health.

Ald. E. Robinson (1948-53).

Member of Stanley U.D.C. For eighteen years a member of
Durham County Council, on which he was secretary of the
Labour Group. Ex-miner.

Mr. H. O'Neill (1948-61).

Member of Easington R.D.C., 1946-55. Secretary of Easington
Lodge of Durham Miners' Association.

First Chairman of Peterlee Parish Council (1956), on which he
served for two years.

Moved to Peterlee in the mid-1950s.

Mr. J.R. Mackay (1948-9).

Chartered accountant, partner in Pent, Marwick, Mitchell and
Co. (Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Darlington). Resident of
Hexham, Northumberland.

Mr. R.F. Lee (1948-63).

Formerly headmaster of Seaham Secondary School; ex-President
of National Association of Head Teachers.

Chairman of Seaham U.D.C. Local magistrate. M.B.E.

Resident of Ponteland, Northumberland.

Mr. F.D. Nicholson (1949-50).

b. 1905. Educated Harrow and Cambridge.

T.D., D.L., J.P., M.A. Resident of Plawsworth, Durham.

Managing Director of Vaux Breweries, Sunderland.

Member of Durham R.D.C. High Sheriff of Durham, 1948-9.

Mr. T. Howarth (1942-50).

Chief Accountant for Port of London Authority.

Mr. C.C. Robinson (1949-55).

b. 1887. Educated at Cambridge.

C.B.E., F.R.I.C., M.I.Chem.E. Resident of Cambridge.

Chairman of I.C.I. (General Chemicals) Ltd.

Chairman of Aycliffe Development Corporation 1953-63.

Lord Leveridge (1949-51). Chairman.

b. 1879. Educated at Oxford.

Numerous Government posts - Director of Labour Exchanges, 1909-16. Member of Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, 1925; Chairman of Unemployment Insurance Committee, 1934-44. Author of "Pillars of Security", 1943 and "Full Employment in a Free Society", 1944.

Director of the L.S.E., 1919-37 and Master of University College, Oxford, 1937-45.

Chairman of Aycliffe Development Corporation 1947-53; lived at Aycliffe whilst Chairman.

d. 1963.

Ald. F.C. Pette (Member, 1949-51; Chairman, 1952-6).

b. 1890.

Left school at 14 to become a messenger-boy with Middlesbrough Co-operative Society; educated himself through Co-op. and W.E.A. lecture classes.

Became general manager of Middlesbrough Co-operative Society in 1932 and in 1949 he became President of the National Association of Co-operative Managers.

A life-long trades unionist and Labour Party member, he became a Labour member of Middlesbrough Town Council in 1938 and Mayor in 1947.

Sir S.A. Sadler Forster (1950-8).

b. 1900. C.B.E. Knighted in 1966.

Began as a chartered accountant in Middlesbrough and, as Secretary of the Teesside District Development Board in the 1930s, helped persuade the Government to set up Trading Estates. Joined Board of Trade during the war and was Director of the Board's Trading Estates after the war.

Chairman of North-East Trading Estates Ltd. from 1948-60, then Chairman of its successor, English Industrial Estates Corporation, until 1970.

Member of N.E. Industrial and Development Association 1952-61 and later member of several regional bodies, including the Northern Economic Planning Board (1965-9).

Resident of Gosforth, Newcastle.

Mrs. M. Maddison (1951-3).

Educated at L.S.E.

Formerly worked at the Spennymoor Settlement and was Home Help Organiser for Newcastle City Council.

Mr. J. Evans (1951-3).

Worked at Blackhall Colliery since 1936; chairman of the Miners Lodge.

Mr. E. Moore (1954-63).

No details known. Resident of Durham City.

Cllr. T.H. Sammerson (1954-5).

b. 1903. Educated at Harrow.

J.P., D.L., High Sheriff of Durham 1953-4.

Chairman and joint managing director of Sammerson Holdings Ltd. and subsidiary companies since 1944.

Member of Darlington R.F.C. from 1937.

President of Teesside and S.W. Durham Chamber of Commerce, 1948-50; President Teesside Industrial Development Board, 1954-7.

Chairman of North-East Industrial and Development Association 1952-5; member of Development Areas Treasury Advisory Committee, 1951-5.

Member of Aycliffe Development Corporation, 1947-63.

Resident of Coatham Mundeville, Darlington.

Mrs. T. Denholm (1955-9).

No details known.

Mr. J.E. Steel (1956).

No details known. d. 1956.

Mr. L. Slater (1956-63).

b. 1908. Educated at Cambridge.

Reader in Geography at the University of Durham; Pro-Vice Chancellor, 1969.

Ald. W. Baines (1957-64).

On appointment was chairman of Durham County Council.

Resident of Fishburn, Co. Durham. d. 1964.

Col. H.H. Peile (1957-68). Chairman

Educated at Harrow.

Managing director of Priestman Collieries and director of Shotley Bridge and District Gas Co. until Nationalization.

Subsequently became a part-time member of Northern Gas Board. Chairman of Weardale Lead Co. Ltd.

Director of Northern Rock Building Society.

Director of A.P. Bell & Co., manufacturers of mining machinery and chairman of Washington Engineering Ltd.

Resident of Ponteland, Northumberland.

Mr. S.S. Tegner (1959-68).

b. 1901. Educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge.

Broadcaster, writer and journalist; author of numerous books on natural history.

Managing director of Scott & Turner Ltd. and member of Sherlock & Edmenson, stock and share broker.

Resident of Whalton, nr. Morpeth, Northumberland.

Mrs. K.J. Sansom (1960-73).

Former Mayoress of Darlington.

Resident of Middleton Tyas, nr. Richmond, Yorks.

Cllr. R. Taylor (1961-)

Left school at 14, joined the Labour Party at 17 and contested a seat for them.

In 1947 he bought a newsagent's shop in Haswell and opened another shop in Peterlee in 1952 - one of the town's first shops. By 1962 Cllr. Taylor had six shops and an interest in a hairdressing salon.

One of the founder members of Peterlee Labour Party, of which he became chairman in 1960. Was one of Peterlee's

representatives on Easington R.D.C. in the mid-1950s and became the town's first representative on Durham County Council in 1960.

Resident of Old Shotton, Peterlee.

Mr. C.U. Peat (1963-5).

b. 1892. Educated at Sedbergh and Oxford.

M.C., M.A., F.C.A.

Unionist M.P. for Darlington, 1931-45. President of the Board of Trade, 1941. Joint Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Supply, 1942-5.

President, Institute of Chartered Accountants, 1959-60.

(Previously Member of Aycliffe Development Corporation; appointed to the Joint Board in 1963).

Resident of Whorlton, Barnard Castle.

Ald. J.R.S. Middlewood (1963-5).

Began work at the age of 11; worked at the brickworks, the pit and then the railways.

Prominent trades unionist and Labour Party member. Chairman of the strike committee for the Auckland area in 1926. Went into local government in 1931, defeating Sir Richard Pease, coal-owner.

By 1967 he had been chairman of Bishop Auckland U.D.C. eight times. He was the first Labour man to become a Deputy Lieutenant of the County.

Turner (1967) notes: "his background is almost impeccably right for political success in Durham." Known locally as "Uncle Bob", he regards himself as a man of the "progressive centre".

(Previously Member of Aycliffe Development Corporation; appointed to the joint Board in 1963).

Resident of Bishop Auckland.

Miss E.S. Riley-Lord (1963-7).

Deputy chairman of the magistrates at the Darlington County Branch.

Resident of Croft, nr. Darlington.

Ald. A. Cunningham (1965-73).

Trade union member since the age of 14, joined the Labour Party at the age of 22. Won a seat on Felling U.D.C. at the age of 29 and was three times chairman of the U.D.C.

From 1946 was a member of Durham County Council and has served as its chairman.

Elected onto the Labour Party National Executive Committee in 1965. Served on numerous committees: in 1967 was chairman of the Wear and Tees River Board, the Durham County Police Authority and the N.E. Regional Airport Committee.

Described in the Sunday Times (28.4.74) as "Smith's most influential recruit" and "once the most powerful man in County Durham", he was sentenced on corruption charges in 1974. Resident of Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham.

Cllr. J.B. Davison (1965-73).

Member of Easington R.D.C. since 1949; has served as chairman of that council. Resident of Murton.

Mr. E.D. Appleton (1965-73).

Senior partner in a firm of chartered auctioneers and estate agents at Stockton-on-Tees.

President of Stockton and Thornaby Boy Scouts Association.

O.B.E. Local magistrate.

Resident of Norton, nr. Stockton, Cleveland.

Cllr. B. Vickers (1965-)

Went to work at the pit at 14, became a deputy at Chilton Colliery. Labour Party member. In 1951 became a member of Darlington R.D.C. and in 1975 chairman of Sedgefield District Council. One of the first residents of Lycliffe and the first chairman of the Community Association there.

Cllr. W. Nunn (1968-)

Member of Shildon U.D.C. and, subsequently, Sedgefield District Council. Served as a member of the Northern Economic Planning Council.

Mr. F.D. Smith (1963-70). Chairman

b. 1915 in Wallsend, son of a miner.

Newcastle City Councillor 1950-66.

Member of Royal Commission on Local Government, 1966-9.

Chairman of Northern Economic Planning Council, 1965-70.

Director of several P.R. companies and decorating firms.

Hon. D.C.L., Univ. of Newcastle, 1966.

Found guilty of corruption at the Poulson trial in 1974; sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Resident of Newcastle.

Prof. E.S. Page (1968-)

Professor of Computing at Newcastle University.

Mr. H.D. Stevenson (1971 -) Chairman

b. 1945. Educated at Edinburgh Academy and Cambridge.

Involved in commercial market research and self-financed social research - including studies of West Indians and Old Age Pensioners.

Chairman of Independent Advisory Committee on Pop Festivals,

1972- . Chairman, National Association of Youth Clubs, 1973- .

Resident of London and Peterlee.

Baroness Masham of Ilton, Countess of Swindon (1973-).

b. 1935. Life peeress; m. Lord Masham in 1959.

Educated at the London Polytechnic.

Involved in social work; especially concerning the physically handicapped.

Resident of Masham, nr. Ripon, Yorks.

Cllr. W. Horsfield (1973-).

Began work at 14 at the pit, spending four years at Wingate and Fishburn collieries.

After the war employed at Dryburn Hospital, Durham, and later became Deputy Supplies Officer at a Middlesbrough hospital.

He moved to Peterlee in 1954. Became a member of Peterlee Parish Council in 1957 and has served as chairman of that council. Founder member of Peterlee Labour Club.

Prior to his appointment to the P.D.C. Board, Cllr. Horsfield served as Parish Council representative on the Liaison Committee.

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